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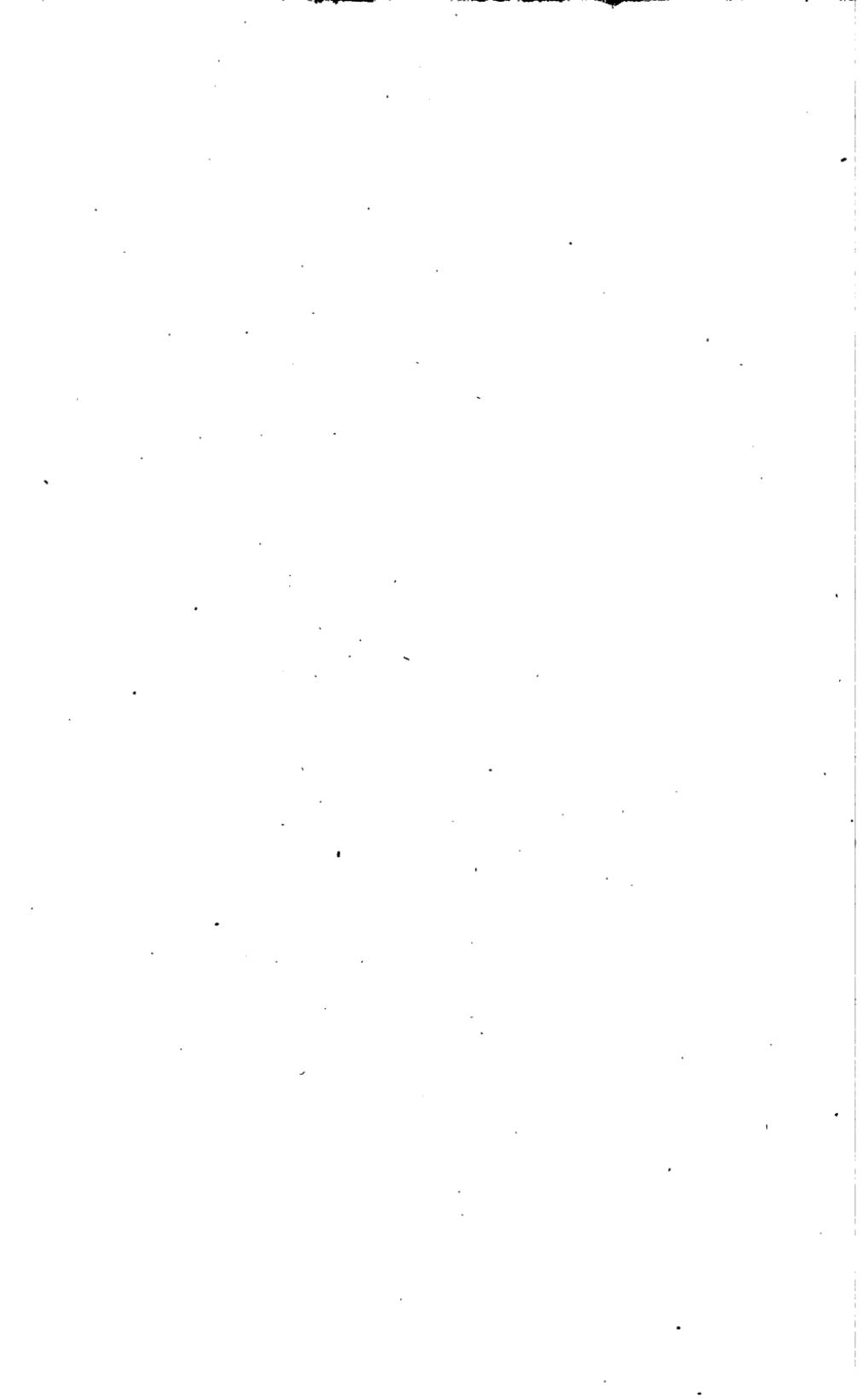
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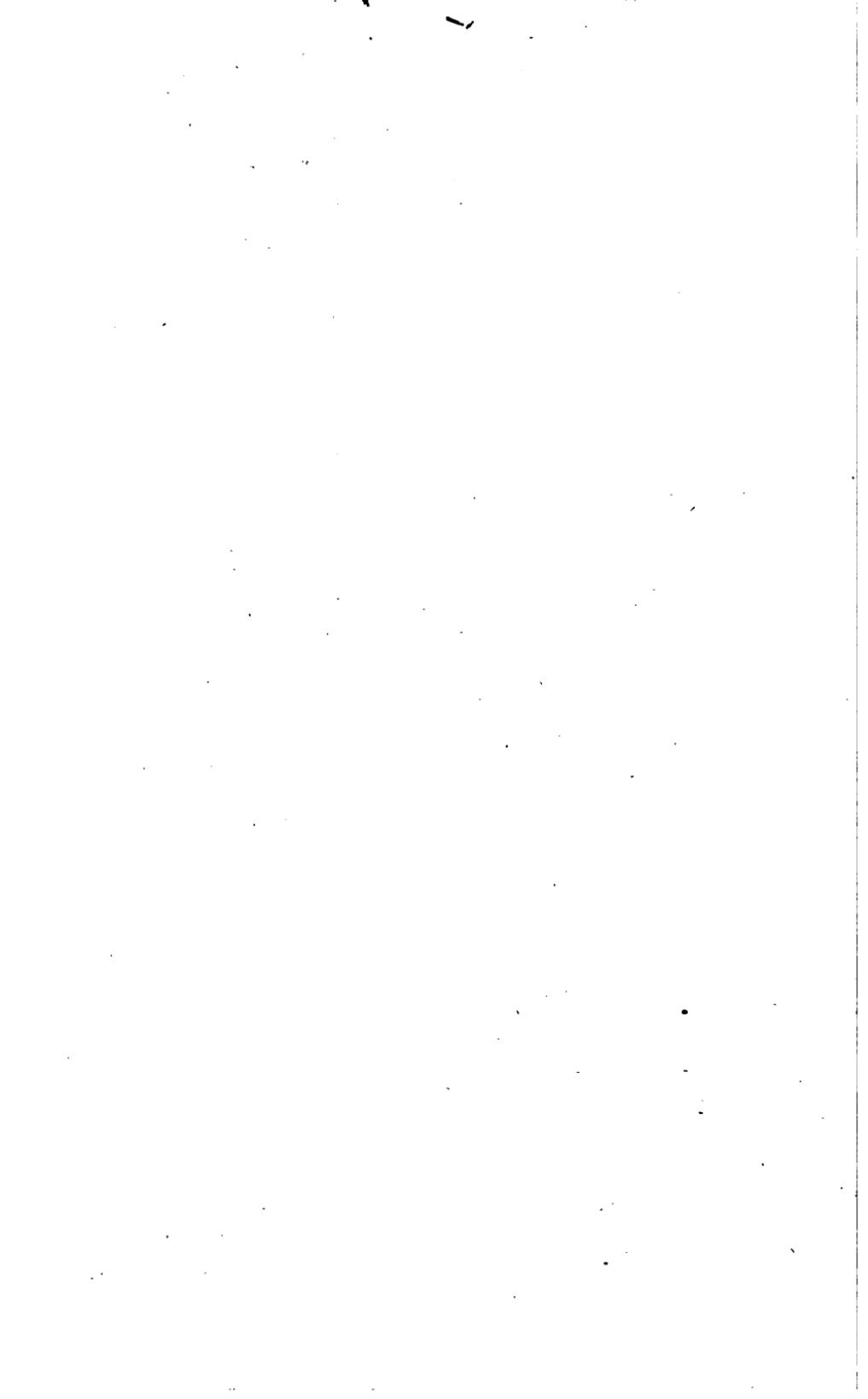




Highway
Mid/le
1801







Highway
Whitbome
1788

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
TREATMENT and CONVERSION
OF
AMERICAN SLAVES
IN THE
BRITISH SUGAR COLONIES.

BY THE
REVEREND JAMES RAMSAY, M.A.
VICAR of TESTON, in KENT.

God hath made of one Blood all Nations of the Earth, for to dwell on
all the Face of the Earth, Acts xvii. 26.

He that stealeth a Man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his Hand,
he shall surely be put to death, Exodus xxi. 16.

London:
Printed and Sold by JAMES PHILLIPS, George-Yard,
Lombard-Street.

M.DCC.LXXXIV.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

A Letter of an ordinary length, in answer to the humane one which is here subjoined, gave beginning to this performance. By frequent transcription, it sensibly increased in size, and extended itself to collateral subjects, till it had become something like a system for the regulation and improvement of our sugar colonies, and the advancement and conversion of their slaves.

On submitting the manuscript to those, who were much better judges than the author could pretend to be, of the present prevailing taste (and many persons of rank and learning have honoured it with a perusal) the account of the treatment of slaves in our colonies engaged their sympathy, and the

plan for their improvement and conversion had their hearty good wishes. But they exhorted him, almost all with one voice, to suppress every part that tended to introduce those political discussions, which must be unavoidable in treating of the state of colonies, and their dependence on a mother country.

As the author had, from the first, no private views to gratify in the plan, and wished only to give it every possible chance of success with the public, their decision was final with him; and in conformity to it, every thing that related to the improvement, and better government of the colonies, has been omitted. By this alteration in the original form of the work, it has necessarily lost something of that systematic order, which contributes so much to the beauty of compositions, and leads so pleasantly on from premises to conclusion. But humanity is its object, not reputation. When the finer feelings of the soul are engaged, it would be a criminal trifling to aim at amusement.

I will not insult the reader's understanding, by an attempt to demonstrate it to be
an

an object of importance, to gain to society, to reason and religion, half a million of our kind, equally with us adapted for advancing themselves in every art and science, that can distinguish man from man, equally with us made capable of looking forward to and enjoying futurity. I rather wish to call in his benevolence, his conscience, his interest, to give their aid in carrying on the work. The people, whose improvement is here proposed, toil for the British state. The public, therefore, has an interest in their advancement in society. And what is here claimed for them? Not bounties, or gifts from parliament, or people; but leave to become more useful to themselves, their masters, and the state. And surely a plan, that has such an end in view, needs only to be explained to procure a general prepossession in its favour. While the man of feeling finds every generous sentiment indulged in the prospect which it opens, the politician, the selfish, will have all their little wishes of opulence, and accumulation fully realized. The design then, must have every man of every complexion combined in its behalf; and there is nothing to be accounted for but

the author's courage, in presuming to offer to the public his thoughts in particular on the subject.

From the manner in which this work had its beginning, it will appear that neither vanity, nor self-sufficiency, led the author to the attempt. It was not till after the seventh copy had been read, and its purpose approved of by many persons of worth and judgment, that he entertained the most distant thoughts of publication. Even now, that it has undergone every suggested correction, and received every improvement that three transcriptions in succession could give it, on their opinion, rather than his own, he rests the probability of its proving acceptable to the public.

Not to be guilty of stifling what had a generous purpose in view, and possibly might do good, if so it pleased God, has been, from the first, as far as respected himself, the only inducement. Profit he disclaims; and willingly would he transfer all the credit that can possibly arise from it, to him who would take on him the censure. Yet should he not forgive himself, were he to discover that ill nature had sharpened a single expression

expression in the Essay, or dragged an unlucky object of resentment into view. To blame has not been a pleasant task. He has suffered more from the necessity of doing it, than the persons affected will probably do from the application; which yet, except in one case, must be the work of conscience with themselves. In this case, the person who is the object, is of such an happy disposition, as to be incapable of feeling censure, and of that established character, that nothing can hurt him. The public, therefore, has a right to him, as to a beacon placed near a dangerous quick sand.

To conclude, the reader has here the remarks of about twenty years experience in the West-Indies, and above fourteen years particular application to the subject. If it draws the attention due to its importance, the author will have the satisfaction of reflecting, that he has not lived in vain for his country and mankind. And this consideration will smooth before him the otherwise rugged paths of life. Should it fail in answering his well meant purpose, still the thoughts of having made the attempt, will please on reflection; nor will the intention lose its re-

ward there, where his particular aim is to be found acceptable.

Letter referred to above, which suggested to the author the consideration of the following subject.

I will omit any apology, however needful, for offering my thoughts on the subject of slavery, to one, whose office and opportunities among slaves must induce him to think and act what is right respecting them. The most I can hope for is, to echo to him some of his own reflections, which perhaps the universal carelessness and indifference prevailing in every thing that concerns them, may, at times, cause him to pass inattentively by, or consider less than their importance deserves.

I am sure Mr. — must always think himself not only obliged to use his slaves with kindness, but also viewing them as fellow-creatures, bound to extend his care to the security of their eternal happiness, by instructing them in the relation which they bear to the great Author of their being, and gracious Redeemer of their souls, and in

in the duty arising from that relation, as it is revealed in the gospel, and is required of all men, who seek after future happiness. A care which, however contrary to the usual policy of masters, would be the most probable means of making slaves diligent and faithful; for it would awaken conscience within them, to be a strict overseer, and a severe monitor, whom they could not evade. This is a consequence, that if duly considered, might induce even those who, neglecting to take providence into the account, consider only how they shall make the most of their stock, to afford their slaves opportunities of learning their duty; allowing them, for example, some portion of the week for procuring their subsistence, and setting the Lord's day apart for religious instruction.

Still granting that masters, who look no farther than present profit, may laugh at the far-fetched expectation, surely men who believe in revelation cannot indulge a doubt but that the treating of them like fellow-creatures, and the shewing of mercy to their souls, will on the whole more advance the master's real interest, than a method which suffers

x P R E F A C E.

suffers them to continue in brutish ignorance of themselves and their Creator ; which obliges them to labour for the support of their bodies, on a day set apart for the improvement of their souls.

I know in this case it is argued, “ to suppose that the work of five days may possibly be found as profitable to owners, as that of six days, is to expect that God will work a miracle to reward the indulgence ; an extraordinary exertion of power, which on so trivial an occasion, it would be presumptuous to look for.” But when in any situation, we doubt God’s justice or goodness, we injure his power and wisdom, for these act under their influence. And when we imagine him resting at a distance, or acting only in great events, we entertain improper notions of his relation to the work of his own hands. Scripture and reason, when they contemplate the Divine nature, join to represent him as ever present to all his works, as quickening every thing that liveth, upholding whatever hath a being, as directing the operations of nature, and guiding the actions of men, all to their proper purposes, in a manner indeed that we cannot comprehend.

comprehend ; but so, that a sparrow falls not to the ground without his permission, and that a cup of cold water given for his sake, doth not escape his notice, nor go without its reward ; yet in a manner, which leaves unrestrained that liberty, by which moral agents become accountable for their actions. And if this be the state of things, under God's government, can we doubt of *their* recompense, who, in conformity to God's injunctions laid on our first parents, and since often renewed, allow themselves and their dependents leisure, on the Lord's day, to learn their Creator's will, and pay him a rational homage and duty ? Humbly to believe and expect this, as declared to us in God's general promises in scripture, is an instance of faith that we cannot refuse to his veracity, who has engaged to perform it.

Even were we unable to conceive a particular method, by which a compensation for this relinquished part of our servants labour could be effected, when we on that account conclude, that the obedience will reflect no benefit on us, we distrust God's promises, or doubt of his ability to find a way to reward our compliance with his will.

will. And yet, without working a manifest miracle, God, may give success to our endeavours, in a thousand ways, which shall seem to be the natural effects of industry, or of that unknown direction of human affairs, which in common account is called chance. He may make us skilful in managing occasions, sagacious in foreseeing events. He may preserve us from expensive illness, guard us from mischievous neighbours. He may bless us with faithful servants. He may incline mens affections to us, and make them instruments in promoting our prosperity. Endless are the methods by which, in an unperceived manner, he can turn the common accidents of life to reward men who prefer duty to present advantage, who co-operate with his benevolence in promoting the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

To doubt of a reward, even in this world, whenever it shall be, on the whole, best for us, is to doubt of the propriety and efficacy of prayer, and to cut off our hopes of its success. Yet God invites us to make our requests known unto him, and solemnly promises, that when we ask we shall receive. That it will be so, even in this life, we may positively

ly conclude, if we consider only the consequence of this just reflection, “ What is “ called the ordinary course of Providence, “ which governs events, is not the effect “ of blind chance, or uncontrollable fate, “ but a wise and orderly chain of causes and “ effects, adapted by the Almighty contri- “ ver, as nicely to the conduct of free “ agents, as to the instincts of brutes, or “ the laws of vegetable and inanimate mat- “ ter.”

It is owned even by men who consider slaves as property, and who, having bought them, conclude that they have a right to make the most of their money that the working of slaves beyond their ability, shortens their lives, and checks their population. Do not such men acknowledge in this, strong traces of Divine justice, punishing cruelty and thirst of gain by the most natural means, by making them counteract and defeat their own purpose. And by parity of reasoning may we not expect Providence to prosper by means as natural, our humane, benevolent attention to wretches, whom the crimes and avarice of selfish men have placed in our power? With respect

respect to religion, unless we deny revelation to be a blessing, or benefit to mankind, we cannot hold ourselves blameless, if we forbear using our best endeavours to communicate the knowledge of it to every one within our reach. And whatever may be our success in other respects, the pains that we use to improve the minds of our fellow creatures, will return with advantage into our own bosoms. God's grace will be stirred up within us, and our own disposition and behaviour will be corrected and amended.

Introductory Address, in Answer to the preceding Letter.

I have perused with attention, your humane and pious remarks on the treatment of slaves in the British colonies. I think myself honoured by your supposing me, in particular, capable of being influenced in my behaviour towards them, by a consideration so benevolent, as a respect to their moral improvement, and their eternal welfare. In return, allow me to think highly of the heart, that with a good will, in which the meanest

meanest and most distant of your kind have a share, can, in the cause of humanity and religion, thus warmly interest you for such unpitied, and despised objects as our slaves in general are.

An account which may be depended on, in a matter wherein humanity is nearly concerned, cannot be unsatisfactory to a mind, turned like yours to all the tender feelings. And though I fear the emotions which this account must naturally raise in your breast, will not be of the cheerful kind, yet I doubt not of its producing reflections, which you would not willingly have been without. An humble resignation to the measures of Providence, is our duty at all times ; but then especially, when our concern for God's glory, and our brother's eternal welfare, seems to mark out an object for our wishes and prayers, which God is pleased to keep reserved among the hidden things of his government, till his own good time shall come to reveal, and give it to the world.

I wish indeed, for your ease, that I could have comprehended any tolerable view of the subject, within more moderate limits ; but it became complex under my hands, and drew

drew after it a variety of considerations. Happy still should I have thought myself, could I have made this view, such as it is, express what you charitably wish it might unfold; could I inform you, that we are careful of the bodies, and tender of the souls of these our fellow-creatures, thus submitted to our power, thus abandoned to our humanity. But truth requires a different, a mournful tale of unconcern and unfeeling neglect.

To make this view more complete, I shall first consider the several natural and artificial ranks that take place in social life, and more particularly that of master and slave in the European colonies. I shall shew how much the public would be profited, and how much the master would gain, by advancing slaves in social life. I shall shew how this advancement in society, and their improvement in religion, must necessarily go hand in hand, and assist each other, if either one, or both these purposes, be our view respecting them. As extravagance and avarice have begun of late to make sad encroachments on that rest of the sabbath, which hitherto had been reckoned sacred; in addition to

your

your pious reasons for setting it apart for the purposes of religion ; I shall prove how much this inconsiderate robbery hurts the master's own interest. I shall assert the claim of the Negroes to attention from us, by explaining their natural capacity, and proving them to be on a footing of equality in respect of the reception of mental improvement, with the natives of any other country. And in conclusion I shall lay down a plan for their improvement and conversion.

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Of

E S S A Y
ON THE
TREATMENT and CONVERSION
OF
AFRICAN SLAVES
IN THE
BRITISH SUGAR COLONIES.

C H A P. I.

Of the various RANKS in SOCIAL LIFE.

THE is a natural inequality, or diversity, which prevails among men that fits them for society, enables them to fill up all the different offices of polished life, and forms their varied abilities, nay, even their particular defects and wants, into a firm band of union. Where the arrangement

ment of these varied attributes in man is conducted in society by the views of nature, or the dictates of revelation which explain and inforce them, there the feelings and interests of the weaker, or inferior members, are consulted equally with those of the stronger or superior. Each man takes that station for which nature intended him; and his rights are fenced around, and his claims are restrained, by laws prescribed by the Author of nature: for He is the only rightful legislator; and human regulations are in a moral sense binding, only when they can be traced immediately, or in principle, to this pure origin. As the creation of man had the general improvement and happiness of the race in view, every law that respects him must suppose an attention to this purpose of his being, and therefore cannot regard the interest of one at the expence of another. All, as far as is consistent with general good, must be left to the free use of their powers and acquisitions, or of life, liberty, and property. In the use of these, within the limits of law, consists the only equality that can take place among men; and it is evident that the extent of this use must

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must vary according to the different situation of each individual, and the capacity, or power of exertion, which he possesseth, and farther must be affected by the state of improvement, that the community, of which he is a member, has attained.

Opposed to this law of nature, and of God, that gives and secures to every man the rights adapted to his particular station in society, stands the artificial, or unnatural relation of master and slave; where power constitutes right; where, according to the degree of his capacity of coercion, every man becomes his own legislator, and erects his interest, or his caprice, into a law for regulating his conduct to his neighbour. And as the one draws its origin from the heavenly fountain of benevolence, so the other may be traced to the infernal enemy of all goodness. For here no mutual benefit is consulted, but every wish, every feeling, is submitted to the mandate of a selfish tyrant. Yet the influence of this lust for acting the master has been so universal, and has obtained so long, as to oblige us also, in principle, to deduce it immediately from that love of power, which, within the boundaries pre-

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scribed by nature, makes a part of our constitution; it not being possible to account for its having so generally prevailed, as we find it has in the world, on any other supposition than its being an abuse of what is natural to mankind, excited and cherished in them by an enemy to their virtue and happiness.

For, as far back as history carries us, we read of master and slave. Even in the savage state, custom, which leaves men on a footing of equality, has enslaved wives. Among our negro slaves, he who cannot attach to himself a wife, or subdue any other creature, buys some half starved dog, over whom he may exercise his tyrannic disposition. If these be the unalienable claims of human nature, and this the practice of mankind opposed to them, how necessary must it be to fix such boundaries, as may preserve the rights of the weak from the incroachments of the strong. And this cannot be done in a more effectual manner, than by drawing the natural, and the artificial state of society, each in its proper colours, and leaving the decision to the common sense of mankind.

S E C T.

S E C T. I.

The Ranks into which the Members of a Community necessarily separate.

In every independent state, whether monarchy or republic, that has got beyond the first steps of civilization, the people, or citizens, naturally divide into sovereign and subject, master and family, employer and employed; all other ranks being arbitrary or artificial.

The sovereign declares and executes the will of the people at large. He must therefore be supreme, or uncontrollable by any particular number, or part of the people. His authority must extend over all ranks, comprehend all possible cases, and conclude every particular district. In this sense he is arbitrary, or intrusted with the power of enacting and abrogating laws, within the limits which man's constitution, and, the dictates of morality prescribe. But the sovereign, whether hereditary or elective, permanent or temporary, one or many acting together in one body, is intrusted with this power for the benefit of the people, which

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supposeth it to be exercised for the general good; therefore the law, or will of the sovereign should be declared in general terms, that it may affect individuals only by inference in particular cases, and conclude the person of the sovereign in his ordinary conduct, and individual capacity, equally with the subject.*

It is the general purpose of every government, that, in extraordinary cases, constitutes the people judges of their sovereign's conduct, and justifies them in resuming a power, which, in respect of its end, must be considered as delegated. Such a case happened at the revolution. But the occasion may

* This circumstance is carried to a great length in the British constitution with the happiest effects. The House of Peers helps to compose the legislature; but each member, as an individual, continues subject to the laws. The House of Commons possesses, for a time limited, a share in the legislation; but each representative is a private citizen, under the operation of the laws; and, after a time, the whole mixes with the mass of the people, to obey, as subjects, those statutes that they had assisted to frame. The person of the king alone, out of respect to his office, is not made the object of coercive law. It is this mixed character of legislator and citizen in our rulers that makes authority compatible with freedom; not the particular proportion of those who have the privilege of electing them, or their numbers, or the period for which they may have been chosen.

safely

safely continue to be left, as it was then, to the feelings of the people. Designing men, otherwise unable to work themselves into notice, are, under the mask of patriotism, so ready to set up, at every trifle, a clamour against government, to enhance their price, or pave the way to their own ambition, that a virtuous citizen will not easily suffer himself to be drawn in to join the cry.

A free state, then, is that in which known laws bind equally sovereign and subject. A proclamation forbidding the exportation of grain is an act of power, resting on the propriety of the measure. A vote of credit is as illegal a manner of raising money on the subject, as was formerly ship-money, or a benevolence; though it may not be followed by all their bad consequences. Both shew a defect in the constitution which wants to be corrected by a general law, prescribing the proper conduct in particular exigencies. The law that shut up Boston Port was hard, because particular. A law to shut up every port, where the revenue laws are resisted, would be just and equitable. Thus might a dictatorial authority, (I mean a latent power to be occasionally

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called forth) which is necessary in every state, be established on a legal foundation, and be kept from transgressing its due bounds.*

Families are, in the detail, what communities are at large, except that the head, or master of the family, having a kind of property, either continued or temporary, in all under his roof, governs by the dictates of discretion, rather than by known laws. Still the good, even of the lowest member of the family, must be a co-operating principle. And that family, whose government approaches nearest to the regular method, which prescribed known rules suppose, where the claims, and duty, or business, of

* The cases, for which it is necessary to provide a dictatorial power, may easily be foreseen, and be provided for in one general statute, to be binding till the legislature can be assembled to deliberate on the subject. The circumstances that make it proper to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, to open or shut the ports, to lay embargoes, to give a vote of credit, may easily be enumerated. But arbitrary undefined power has charms too alluring to be resigned by any, who find themselves in possession of it. Even our House of Commons, while acting as guardian of the privileges of the people, chooses to submit its right of commitment, in cases of contempt, to the capricious decision of any ordinary magistrate, rather than permit the circumstances of the claim to be defined by a positive law,

each

each individual is distinctly ascertained, will, on the whole, be best managed, and allow the persons composing it to enjoy the greatest possible freedom in their stations.

In this light the rank of master and servant is comprehended in that of family; servants, as a part of the family, are subject to its rules, and, as contributing to its ease, are intitled to its advantages. But as the agreement between the master and servant is voluntary, prescribing the duty on one side, and ascertaining the wages on the other, it may likewise be considered under the head of employer and employed. The want, at first view, appears to be reciprocal; but custom has universally affixed to property the idea of superiority over personal ability, or labour. It is in this particular view, of emolument of office, that magistrates may be said to be the servants of the people, though when their authority, and not their maintenance, is considered, they may be said to partake of sovereignty.

The possessing of materials, or a subject to be improved for use by the skill or labour of another, supposeth in the possessor a right to prescribe the manner in which that skill is

is to be exercised, or that labour performed; and on allowing a certain reward or advantage to the man, thus employed, to appropriate to his (the possessor's) own use the labour, or improved materials. This superiority is balanced on the side of the workman, by his being free to refuse or accept the condition. It varies with the demand for labour, and with the number of those, who offer themselves to the work; but mutual want and mutual utility is the band that connects them together.

Similar to this, is the relation between the mechanic, or artizan, and his customer. The artizan provides his own materials, and works for the public: yet, though he sets his own price on his workmanship; and the customer, without having made a previous bargain, can only refuse or agree to the condition, the consideration of having given occasion for the employment, in most cases, transfers the superiority to the customer.

In the case of the learned professions, there is, indeed, some variety; but the like analogy of employment on the one side, and encouragement on the other, runs through the whole. Particular persons study, and

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and make themselves acquainted with sciences, that are generally useful, with a view of being employed by the public, and of drawing a maintenance, and deriving distinction from the exercise of their several professions.

Religion, independent of its relation to the Supreme Being, is so necessary to supply the defect of law, and to inforce obedience to government by the influence of conscience, that hitherto, in every polished state, it has made a part of the constitution; and because it is apt to be perverted to bad purposes, by ill designing men, its professors have always been an important object of the public attention.* They are settled in every little corner of the state as monitors, or censors of the people, and they have their maintenance ascertained out of the labours of those, whom they are appointed to ex-

* If it be objected, that the original constitution of several of the American provinces is an exception, it may be answered, that these provinces were settled under the protection of a state, of whose constitution an established religion made an essential part; and, at a period, when the hopes and fears of futurity had a general influence, independent of public establishments; and that they have not had a length of time, or, till within these few last years, been in circumstances to shew the genuine effects of such a peculiarity.

hort and instruct. Their support cannot, any more than that of the magistrates, be left by government to the voluntary choice of the people, because those, who most need to be controuled by the ministry of both, favour their institution least, and would be far from contributing willingly to their maintenance. It would be unjust to expect, that the good citizen should alone be taxed to support that magistrate, whom the conduct of the bad renders especially necessary; or that the pious man alone should contribute to maintain that minister, who, as far as respects the state, is established chiefly to moderate the profligacy of the vicious. The lowest members of the state, men insensible of the necessity of establishments, and generally unable to contribute to them, yet at the same time objects of them, and possessing importance sufficient to demand the public care, are the great consideration in the institution of magistrate and minister. The public, therefore, must establish equally, and maintain both. The clergy, by their establishment, become servants of the public, for promoting order and good conduct among the people, by the hopes and fears

fears of religion. As such they have their duty prescribed, and their maintenance, and rights, ascertained by law; which fixes the limits of each, and prevents their encroachments.

Men are so attentive to whatever regards their health, or property; and the emoluments, and distinction, which accompany eminence in the professions relating to them, encourage such numbers to apply to them, that government has seldom been obliged to meddle with the practice of law or physic. A man applies to that physician, or lawyer, who has his confidence; and he must exert skill and address to preserve that distinction. Here the dependence and utility are reciprocal, and adequate to the purpose. These professions, though a consequence of society, yet respect each man chiefly as an individual; on this account, except in flagrant abuses, they are safely left to private interest, and private exertion. But religion, in its establishment, respecting chiefly public order, and private improvement only as far as it is subsidiary to the other, its professors are considered as auxiliaries to the magistrate, and thus, being servants of the state, are supported at the public charge.

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In the profession of arms there is something more particular; but still the general analogy takes place. In it one part of the community comes under certain engagements for the preservation of the whole; but the exigency is supposed to be pressing, and the purpose national. When it is necessary to establish an army, the soldier becomes obliged to obey his general. Here the soldier protects himself, his family, his country: and to do this with effect, he submits to such orders as are conducive to that end; and in the exercise of his duty his country cares for, and maintains, him. He, therefore, is also the servant of the public, and, as such, is employed, and maintained by it; being as necessary, in time of peace, to preserve the little police that licentiousness has suffered to remain among us, as, in time of war, to defend us from our enemies.

Now in the case of the laws, which respect government and people, the rule is general, fixed, and known, and equally binds the sovereign and citizen. Prejudice, caprice, or interest, cannot single out an individual to tyrannize over him. In the case of a family, its strict union and affection bind it in one common interest, and cause the members to rejoice

rejoice or suffer together. In the case of the labourer or artizan, he being at liberty to accept or refuse an offer from a particular employer or customer, and this last being also free in making his agreement, and obliged to comply with it, when determined on; these conditions secure both parties equally from injury and oppression. In the learned professions, the like circumstances produce similar effects. Even in the profession of arms an equality is preserved in the compact, and sentiment and honours compensate for the resignation of some of the privileges of citizenship.

But in the arbitrary relation of master and slave, no law restrains the one, no election or compact secures the other. The master may invade the dearest rights of humanity, and trample on the plainest rules of justice; the slave cannot change his tyrant, or remonstrate against the impropriety, perhaps impossibility, of his task.

The authority which men allow to the laws that govern them, has its foundation in general utility, and the reason of things: and as all law is, or ought to be founded on our constitution, it, according to what has been observed, draws its ultimate sanction

sanction from the God of nature, and thus interests conscience in the obedience due to it. Here the equality and comprehensiveness of the rule secure the individual from oppression; he can be affected only together with the community, or when he puts himself in the case forbidden generally by the law. Hence it is that all Bills of Attainder must carry oppression and injustice in their very form, being calculated not for general utility or prevention, as laws should be, but for particular destruction; not for guarding against crimes, but for creating them. The deference claimed by the employer or customer, and the respect paid by, or to the learned professions, according to the rank of the persons concerned, have their foundation in the regard shewn to wealth, learning, or power; and their excess is guarded against by the nature of the compact, and the power of assent lodged with the labourer, artizan, or inferior person. Now as far as the deference respecting the employer extends, it supposeth as real a superiority, limited only in its operation to the design thereof, as that of master over slave; and as it ariseth from the ranks into which society universally separates men, it may

may be called social servitude, which must take place in the freest state.*

Here the servant makes his compact with the master, or superior, and frames it to agree with his feelings, and to fall in with his abilities; and when the terms of his agreement are fulfilled, his time and his enjoyments are in his own power. But in the slavery of our colonies, the larger part of the community is literally sacrificed to the less; their time, their feelings, their persons, are subject to the interest, the caprice, the spite of masters and their substitutes, without remedy, without recompence, without prospects. This may be called artificial servitude, unprofitable to the

* In the contest between Britain and America, it may be remarked, that the friends of the latter contended not for the equality of men, considered as individuals unconnected in society, till mutual benefit brought them together, and formed the distinction of ranks; for in this light Americans have made as inconsiderate masters to as miserable slaves as can any where be found. But they contended for the present actual equality of all men, with an exception to their own slaves. And again, to support the argument, they were obliged to suppose society dissolved, and men reduced to that solitary, savage state, where such equality only can take place. For society cannot be maintained, even in idea, but by the inequality of condition, and various ranks necessarily arising from the social compact.—So easy is it for men to take such parts of reasoning as best suit their present purpose.

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public, burdensome even to the master, intolerable to the servant, repugnant to humanity.

A law, for the purpose of police, may direct the strength and industry of the citizens to a particular object; as when it encourages, by a temporary monopoly, the establishment of a certain staple or manufacture; nay, for purposes which respect the state, it may in certain points, and for a certain period, subject the person of one man to another, as in forming an army. But we cannot suppose a law that shall subject the person of one man to the private purposes of another, without once stipulating the extent of the authority, the nature of the service, or the sufficiency of the recompence. Such a law, by putting, perhaps, the greater part of the community out of the protection of all law, would be inconsistent with the notion of society. For the prime design of society is the extension of the operation of law, and the equal treatment and protection of the citizens. Slavery, therefore, being the negation of law, cannot arise from law, or be compatible with it. As far as slavery prevails in any community, so far must that community be defective in answering the purposes

purposes of society. And this we affirm to be in the highest degree the case of our colonies. Slavery, indeed, in the manner wherein it is found there, is an unnatural state of oppression on the one side, and of suffering on the other ; and needs only to be laid open or exposed in its native colours, to command the abhorrence and opposition of every man of feeling and sentiment.

S E C T. II.

Master and Slave in ancient Times.

We are taught, by the highest authority, that Moses adapted several of his institutions to the particular disposition of his countrymen. He did not attempt to prohibit slavery among them, perhaps, because they were not then more ripe for it, than for the indissoluble band of matrimony ; but while he allowed them to make slaves of the conquered Canaanites and their posterity, he endeavoured to render their lot easy, and the behaviour of masters humane. Indeed, in the early ages, it is in a manner peculiar to him, and the Athenian legislators, (of whom hereafter) to have paid in the case of slaves a proper attention to the reserved and unalienable rights of human nature.

He enacts, that there should be one law, one rule of justice for the native and for the stranger ; which is in direct opposition to some of our colony laws, where the evidence of even a free African will not be taken against a white man. He secures good usage to the slave, by commanding, that if his master, in beating him, strike out but a single tooth, he shall have his freedom. He ordains the personal slavery of every Jew to terminate in the beginning of the seventh, or sabbatical year, whether near at hand, or distant, when that commenced. He guards effectually against a groveling slavish spirit among his people, by condemning him to perpetual slavery, who, inticed by kind treatment from his master, should show a disregard of this noble privilege of the sabbatical year. He calls repeatedly on his people to remember, that they themselves had been slaves in Egypt ; and, therefore, from motives of fellow-feeling should make the condition of their slaves easy and agreeable to them. He bids them treat well strangers of one country, because they had been strangers in their land ; others, because they were of the same lineage with themselves. He tells them,

them, that the institution of a weekly sabbath had in contemplation, the benevolent purpose of giving rest to the wearied slave, and a respite from toil, even to the wearied ox.

Among those nations that had not the light of revelation to direct their conduct, the Athenians deserve the first place: they were indulgent, easy, and kind to their slaves, when compared with their neighbours. And well this condescension became a people, who, by mere force of genius, advanced human nature much nearer to perfection than any other nation. That their good sense did not, in every particular, carry them to that equality of behaviour towards their slaves, which humanity might expect, or benevolence suggest, is not so much to be wondered at, as that they should be able to oppose the example of all their neighbours for capricious severity, and in the chief lines of their conduct respecting such ill-fated beings, should give occasion to the observation, that the life of a slave at Athens was much happier than that of a freeman in any other Grecian state.

If Athenian slaves were treated with cruelty by their masters, they might claim pro-

tection in the Temple of Theseus: there they remained in safety till the subject of complaint could be tried at law. Nor, in that case, did the law ruin, or refuse to relieve, those whom it pretended to assist; for justice was distributed to rich and poor at the expence of the public. If the complaint of the slave was found to be just, the master was obliged to assign over his service to some other person. Slaves could demand an exchange of masters, if their master had made any attempt on their chastity. The law also gave them protection and remedy, in their own names and persons, against every injury that might have been done them by any citizen, not their master.

Athenian slaves were not restrained in any of the common amusements of society. They were allowed to acquire property, on paying their masters a certain yearly rate. If able to purchase their freedom, they might demand it of their master for a determined price. Their masters sometimes, the state often, rewarded their service and fidelity with freedom; in particular, after having been once employed in war, they were sure to be made

made free. Contrary to the policy of modern times, the Athenians deemed no man fit to defend the state, but him who was worthy to be a member of it.

The Athenians reaped the advantage of their moderation and humanity. For though, by the lowest calculation, their country contained three grown male slaves for one freeman, notice is taken, in their history, of only one insurrection among their miners; and once, in time of war, of a considerable number who deserted from their masters, and abandoned the country. On the other hand, their neighbours, the Spartans, who, through a wantonly cruel policy, were continually harrassing, ill treating, oppressing, nay, to keep their hands accustomed to blood, butchering their slaves, were held in constant alarms by them, and often were brought into extreme danger, by their desperate attempts to regain their liberty. Yet the condition of slaves among the Spartans, from the circumstance of their being generally the property of the public, and attached to the soil, more readily admitted of universal relaxation and indulgence, than it did among the Athenians, where they were chiefly private property.

There is such a conformity, not only in these, but other particulars, between the laws of Moses, enacted during the fabulous ages of Greece, and these laws, established in its improved state, long after that time, by a people deservedly celebrated, as the best cultivated, the most sensible, and humane among the ancient nations, as might have secured to that great man a little more respect than he in common meets with, among the wits and reasoners of the present age; who, while they deny his divine mission, in that denial, must acknowledge his foresight, his benevolence, his knowledge of the human heart, above every character in antiquity. For his laws continue, at this day, to be obeyed by a considerable people, in the most inconvenient circumstances, while all other laws of former ages are lost in the gulph of time, or are only to be found in fragments in old neglected books.*

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* Even the law that absolves a master for slaying his slave, in the case of his not dying till two days after the stroke, bears a strong analogy to that tenderness in the common law of England, that distinguishes between homicide and murder, and, as it were loth to find the culprit guilty, takes the deadlines

In the infant state of Rome, slaves worked, and lived with their masters, without much distinction of rank or usage. But in proportion as luxury increased among the Romans, the condition of their slaves sunk gradually down to the lowest degree of wretchedness and misery. And indeed such representations as the statue of the dying gladiator, which exhibits the life of a brave useful man sacrificed, not to the safety of his country, but to the barbarous whim of, perhaps, the most worthless set of men that ever were assembled together in one place;*

deadliness of the weapon into account; and it shews, that among the Jews, the magistrate interposed between the master and his slave; which, in some of our colonies, has not been the case, even when shocking circumstances of murder have loudly called for it.

* In what an amiable point of view doth the following incident place the Athenians, even in their latter degenerate state? Some sycophants of the Romans, then their masters, had proposed to them, in a publick assembly, to imitate their lords, in the exhibition of shows of prize fighters, and gladiators in their theatres. A worthy citizen, who was present, affected to applaud the flattering measure, and requested his fellow-citizens only first to accompany him and help him to throw down the altar, which, in their better times, they had erected to mercy. That sensible people felt immediately the grave rebuke; and were the only state in Greece, that had courage to forbear imitating the barbarity of their conquerors.

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in every thing respecting the freedom, and character of his country, seems inspired with the very genius of liberty, lays it down as a maxim not to be controverted, that the highest evidence, and testimony most to be depended on, is what is forced out of a slave by torture.

Adrian is the first on record, who, by an edict, deprived the master of the power of life and death in his family. As the benevolence of the Christian religion, about his time, had secretly, yet universally, insinuated itself into the sentiments, and tinctured the reasoning, of the learned; and as he was more fond of the title of Philosopher than of Emperor, it is beyond conjecture, that this edict, at that particular

mercifully with a whip. Plutarch, quibbling with the wretch, observes, in answer, that passion generally had marks by which its presence was denoted: an elevated tone, a flushing countenance, a threatening look; could he have any of these, or the violence that they expressed, who argued the matter with all the calmness of a stoic. And as the executioner had interrupted his strokes, waiting for the issue of the discourse, he coolly bids him proceed in his method of inculcating knowledge by the whip, while he and Syrus discussed the subject philosophically. But a man must have spent some time in the southern provinces of North America, or our sugar colonies, to be able to imagine the scene.

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time, owed its origin to revealed religion; and within a short period after this, personal slavery, by the same influence, was abolished throughout the empire*.

S E C T III.

Master and Slave in Gothic Times.

The inundation of the northern nations, that broke into the Roman Empire, and the feudal tenures that were introduced by it, gave rise to a new species of slavery in Eu-

* Raynall asserts, that the abolition of slavery and Paganism, by edict, in the time of Constantine, brought on the ruin of the Roman Empire. Doubtless every violent change in a state, must bring danger with it. But, perhaps, it will be difficult for any, but a modern philosopher, who follows Hume in his paradoxes, to conceive how the extension of sentiment and freedom should spread ruin among a people. That empire had begun to nod to its fall, long before this change could have produced any effect. The universal degeneracy of manners, the contempt of religion, the prevalence of Epicurean notions, the disregard of national character, the effeminacy of the soldiers, their loss of discipline, the instability of the government, and the natural course of human grandeur, are sufficient to account for the downfall of that fabric, under the rude shock of surrounding savages. That Christianity produced this effect of abolishing slavery, is the opinion also of Fletcher; for which see Sect. IV. of this chapter.

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rope, the remains of which are yet to be found, particularly in Denmark and Poland. But it appears, that, in general, this slavery consisted in obliging the conquered nations to cultivate their own lands, and render to the conquerors such a part of the produce as they thought proper to ascertain. This condition naturally connected the labourers with the soil which they cultivated; and it rose into a custom to transfer them together from one proprietor to another: and, doubtless, there were many reduced also to the condition of domestic slaves. But, like the Swedish prisoners made at the battle of Pultowa, they became the teachers and reformers of their masters. And as these were by degrees converted to religion and won to civilized life, so this state of subordination went on approaching gradually to the condition of equality, or rather of that reciprocal social dependence, which we have shewn must exist between the servant and master. And among the many sad things that we every day hear of popes, priests, and priestcraft, this must be acknowledged to their credit, (they are indeed charged with it by their enemies) that their influence was constantly used with the converts,

converts, to procure the manumission, or at least the humane treatment of their slaves. Such has been constantly the natural effect of Christianity, in every possible form, to favour personal as well as mental liberty, till the gradual improvement of society, the extension of sentiment, and fluctuation of property, become sufficient to change personal slavery into a voluntary compact of service and fidelity on the one side, of wages and protection on the other: a compact, which supposeth that state of mutual dependence essential to polished society, and which may be considered as entering originally into the plan thereof, and I trust is not intirely out of sight in the case of which we treat.*

Indeed this latter slavery, in its worst state, must, after the conversion of the masters, have been far preferable to the ancient slavery of the heathens, or the modern slavery of the negroes in the European colonies. The Christian slaves of Christian masters were considered as entitled to certain rights, on which a master could

* The Banians in India are, at this day, supplied with slaves from Abyssinia. But as soon as they are brought home, they are treated as children of the family; they are instructed in some useful trade; they are allowed to raise families, and maintain them with the profits of their labour, with which the master meddles not.

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not encroach: particularly, the making of the ceremony of marriage a religious solemnity, and its obligations of consequence indissoluble, except by death, drew after it all the claims and rights of a family. Their worshipping at the same altar, and their being considered as entitled, equally with their masters, to all the spiritual advantages annexed to the profession of Christianity, were circumstances which the priests were careful to use to the best advantage in their favour: and, in an age, wherein the promises and threats of religion influenced, at least, the outward conduct of the people, and its doctrines made generally a part of the reasoning in use;* when its ministers were held in honour, and their injunctions carried with them reverence and authority for their Master's sake, these were effectual and prevailing topics. The people also reaped advantages from these disputes between the

* This is exceedingly well exemplified in what is called the truce of God or the church, when the sabbaths, and solemn times, and festivals of the church, gave a respite to those ~~evil~~ depredations and murders that each village-tyrant or lord of a castle, those former self-erected legislators, thought himself permitted, at other times, to perpetrate among his ~~neighbours~~ kings

kings and their barons. Kings favoured the liberty of burghers and peasants, because every individual absolved of his allegiance to a baron, was an auxiliary detached from an enemy or rival lord.*

Had Europe, as a much distinguished quarter of the globe, reaped no other social advantage from the establishment of Christianity than the abolition of slavery, this benefit alone would have been immense; the superiority gained by it over the rest of the world would have been incredible. And with what shame and sorrow must we remark, that she, who has been raised so high above her fellows, by the influence of this heaven-descended liberty, at this day is, and, for more than two centuries past, has

* Though, in many cases, this was only changing one tyrant for another; yet the people favoured the measure, because they have constantly found an oppressor intolerable in the inverse ratio of his rank and extent of power. "A poor man, " oppressing the poor," saith Solomon, "is like a sweeping "rain," he leaves no food. To give security to the members of any state, the community must be of that extent and power which will make it respectable among its neighbours; and its governors must be removed so far from the level of other citizens, that private interest or resentment may not sensibly influence their publick conduct. But this can hardly ever be the case in small states.

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been, striving with all the venturous energy of a commercial spirit, to establish slavery in the new world; in a region, where the curse of slavery was unknown, till, through an infernal love of gold, she introduced and fixed it? But when the English, (for though the Portuguese and Spaniards had transported Africans more early to their American settlements; yet Hawkins, an Englishman, is said first to have given occasion for the present inhuman trade) a nation most highly favoured of liberty, is viewed as taking the lead in this odious traffic, and as bending down the soul in utter darkness, the more effectually to enslave the body; freedom must blush indignantly, while humanity mourns over the reproachful tale.* Would God

* It must fill the reader with very serious reflections, to be told, that, since the year 1759, the British African trade has been, in a great proportion, turned to the supplying of the French islands with slaves. This has given a most rapid improvement to their sugar plantations; and there is laid a foundation for such a naval force, as if not guarded against in time may avenge humanity on our nation for this shocking traffic, which it has carried on to a greater extent than all the rest of Europe, with peculiar circumstances of barbarity and cruelty

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God we might indulge the hope, that the same people, who first riveted, might also first cut asunder, the iron chain which disgraces our nature and nation, in the western world; and that a people, who have risqued their own existence, frequently, as a state, to keep one continental tyrant from ridding the world of another, might at last have wisdom to render themselves rich and powerful, by restoring to liberty, and recovering to society and reason, the exiled sons of Africa! * But

* In the month of March 1783, the following circumstances came out in the trial of a case of insurance at Guildhall. An ignorant master of a slave-ship had overshot his port, Jamaica, and was afraid of wanting water before he could beat up again to the island. He himself fell sick. In the course of his illness, he ordered his mate, who was the man that gave the evidence, to throw overboard 46 slaves, hand-cuffed; and he was readily obeyed. Two days after he ordered 36 more to be thrown after them, and after two days more another parcel of 40. Ten others, who had been permitted to take the air on deck, unfettered, jumped into the sea indignantly after them. The ship, after all, brought into port 480 gallons of water.—Can humanity imagine that it was meant, in any possible circumstances, to submit the fate of such numbers of reasonable creatures to the reveries of a sick monster; or that his brutal instrument should dare to boast of his obedience, and even do it with impunity, in the highest criminal court of the best informed people of Europe?

The Incas of Peru conquered to polish and improve. When they came to a brutish people, who could not readily

But before I consider slavery as it has been introduced and established by Europeans in the western world, I shall lay before the reader a plan of that celebrated friend to liberty, Fletcher, of Saltoun, for reducing

apprehend their instructions, Let us turn, said they, from these incorrigible animals, and seek out a people worthy of being our scholars. The savages of America are so wholly without the conception of the possibility of one man's being submitted to the will of another, that they know no medium between roasting their prisoners, and adopting them into their families. The Europeans, settled in the same country, could traverse the vast Atlantic to traffic for, enslave, and sell, wretches unknown to them, who never injured them; nay, could keep working in iron chains their own unhappy countrymen sent among them: while they boast of having vindicated for themselves, as the natural inheritance of freedom, a total independence on all authority not originating from themselves. Reason, as found in practice among men, is but a name, when separated from interest.—It is but justice due to the West Indian proprietors to observe that the planters of tobacco and rice, in America, in common, not only treated their African slaves and English convicts, but even sober, honest people, who, to pay for their passage from Europe, had been obliged to sell their service for five years, with full as much severity as was practised only on Africans in the sugar islands; and, what was inexcusable, in a country where provisions cost labour only, even pinched them in their food. Indented servants were tied up, and lashed cruelly on the most trifling occasions. They were made to drag iron rings of ten or twelve pounds weight, hammered round their ankles, and sleep as they could, with heavy iron chains and crooks round their necks.

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his country back into the ancient state of master and slave, in order to obviate some temporary inconveniences imagined to arise from freedom. And as he does this with an appearance of reasoning, and, indeed, suggests things that would be exceedingly proper to be attended to, in the first dawnings of liberty; I shall at once consider his proposal, and add such observations as naturally arise from it.

S E C T. IV.

Master and Slave, as proposed for Scotland,
Anno 1698.

Soon after the revolution, Scotland was afflicted with four or five successive unfruitful years, that, in its then improvident method of agriculture, reduced it to a state of famine, which is still remembered under the name of the *Dear Years*. Many died of want, and thousands, all over the country, were reduced to beggary; the Highlanders, especially, suffered greatly, and came down and overspread the low-lands; and, where

they did not succeed by begging, made no scruple to steal and rob, to supply their wants. In this situation of things, when the poor were numerous, few manufactures established, and the fisheries lay neglected, did Fletcher propose his plan of slavery, founding it on a statute enacted Anno 1579, which empowered any subject of sufficient estate to take the child of any beggar, and educate him for his own service, for a certain term of years, which term was extended Anno 1597 for life.

He observes, that history makes no mention of poor or beggars in ancient times, because all the poor, being slaves, were maintained by their own masters. He says, no modern state, except Holland, by the aid of its manufactures, has been able to employ or maintain its poor: that this new burthen has been brought on society by churchmen, who either by mistake or design have confounded things spiritual and temporal, and all good order, and good government, by recommending it to masters to save their souls, by setting at liberty such of their slaves as should embrace the Christian faith; in contradiction to our Saviour, who was far from using

using temporal advantages to enforce eternal truths; and to St. Paul, who, 1 Cor. vii. positively gives the preference to slavery. Hence we date hospitals, alms-houses, and contributions; burdens, which we find so heavy on the community, and so inadequate to the purpose.

He states the common objections urged against slavery; that men are equal by nature; that it is unjust to submit the feelings and happiness of the major part of a community, to the oppression and barbarity of the few; and that the tyrant, who enslaves his country, has the same plea for prosecuting his ambitious views, that a rich man can offer for bringing his fellows into bondage to him.

He answers these by distinguishing between political and domestic slavery, affirming that the latter has been disgraced, by having been confounded with the other, which alone deserves the name of slavery, as being submitted, not to law, which may regulate domestic slavery, but to a jealous tyrant's caprice: that it is the interest of every master to use his slaves well, in order that he may reap the full advantage of their labour: that occasional deviations from the sug-

gestions of this prudence may be prevented by proper laws and regulations, and by the watchful care of a judge appointed for that purpose.

He shews the advantages which would accompany this establishment, by stating what was the case in ancient times. The ancients had no poor cast loose on the public. They could, without possessing much other wealth, undertake, with their slaves, great public and private works: and this manner of employing their slaves and their wealth, preserved among them a simplicity of manners, and living, not otherwise to be accounted for. Masters knew nothing of the vexation of hired servants, who, after having been educated at a great expence for a man's service, will leave him on the most trifling occasion. Their slaves, in hopes of obtaining their liberty, had an emulation to please; and their being able to possess nothing, took away that temptation to pilfer, so commonly the propensity of hired servants, and, indeed, sometimes rendered necessary for them to support their families.

He proposeth that vagabonds, and such poor as cannot maintain themselves, be proportioned

portioned out to men of a certain estate, to be employed in their grounds, that their children be brought up to such useful manufactures as can be carried on at home; and that the public may not, in any case, lose the benefit of their labour, they and their children shall be transferable for ever.*

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* Vagabond beggars are a nuisance which call loudly for redress, and which every well regulated society will exert itself to get rid of. Let every vagabond be considered as the property of the public. Let a day be fixed, by proclamation, for apprehending them throughout the kingdom. Let their service be sold for seven years to such as have employment for them. Let the money got for the strong be given with the weak. If, at the expiration of their slavery, they shew a disposition to settle, and can make a private bargain with any responsible person, who will answer to the public for their behaviour, and will take them to work on the footing of free labourers, let them be discharged. This will excite them to be honest and faithful. Slavery, except for a crime that forfeits life, should not be for life, that it may not perpetuate slavery in their children. Every vagabond child should be brought up to some useful calling, and be free at thirty years of age. They all, when restored to freedom, should be allowed a settlement.

A particular magistrate should superintend their treatment, hear, and decide on their and their masters complaints. If at the termination of any period of slavery, they be found unworthy of freedom, let them be sold anew. If purchasers do not offer, let them be divided by lot, and their children be apprentices. Coarse, wholesome food should be allotted them, the kind and minimum being fixed by law.

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He thinks the master should not have power over the life of his servant, but should answer for it with his own. He should not torture or mutilate him: if convicted of such ill treatment, he should free his slave, and

If parishes were obliged to improve their commons, there would be full employment for them; and every thief, being first marked, should be added to the number. When restored to freedom, they might have a cottage and garden given them, in full right, which they may prepare during the time of their servitude.

Such a state would be far beyond the condition of a vagabond, a wretch, that regards neither divine nor human laws, but wallows in every impurity and low vice. These regulations, properly pursued for one generation, would annihilate the evil; the very dread of being sold, and working at the will of another, would recover the greatest part of them to labour and society. But this remedy should be strictly confined to thieves and vagabonds, and only while they continued such.

At present our poor laws are calculated to encourage laziness, by supporting an idle man in as much plenty as him who labours and gets his bread honestly. When sick, the poor should be tenderly cared for; but when only idle they should have a scanty coarse fare, and clothes made up of patches, to make their situation irksome to them. Those that have large families should have every reasonable indulgence, and the burden of their children should be made easy to them. All single strollers should be strictly dealt with. Wherever the indolence of those that are supported by charity is suspected, their pittance should not be given in money, but in food, from day to day; and there should, as in hospitals, be rates of full, half, and third allowance.

fix a pension on him. The servant's family should be provided for in clothes, diet, and lodging. His children should be instructed in the principles of morality and religion, be taught to read, and be furnished with proper books. They shall not work on Sundays; but have liberty to go to church. In every circumstance, but that of not possessing property, and their labour being directed at the will of another, they shall not be under the rule of their masters, but the protection of the law. When grown, by age, useless to their masters, they shall be received into public hospitals. If their master, on any account, make them free, he shall either accommodate them with a pension, or put them in a way of living, that will keep them from becoming burdensome to the public. To check the abuse of power in the master, a magistrate should be appointed to see that justice be done them.

Now, however inadmissible such a state of servitude may be, in a country where liberty is the established birth-right of the lowest member of the community, yet, would heaven, that the slavery in our sugar colonies were only what is here proposed.

W^o

We must then drop many of our objections against it. Still the arguments against this degree of it are unanswerable.

He supposeth that a sense of interest will prevent the abuse of power in the master. There cannot be a fairer deduction in theory, (which was all that he could have to go upon) nor is there one more false in fact. Even should we ascribe the treatment which Africans meet with from their masters, not wholly to an abuse of power, but, in some measure, also to a persuasion, whether it be true or false, that because of their inferiority we are not obliged to treat them well; how comes it that sober, indentured, white servants, are treated with equal, perhaps superior, cruelty by their North American masters; in consequence of which, not more than one in five survives even a temporary slavery of five years, in a condition to settle a habitation and family for himself? Revenge for contradiction or faults in an inferior, whether real or imagined, will not allow the cooler affections of the mind to operate, but drives at once, like an eagle on its helpless prey, heedless how far the avenger himself may be involved in the mischief.

Nor

Nor, though his magistrate be an exceeding proper and necessary check, would he, or could he, if ever so impartial and watchful, be able to ensure good usage to servants, from the ignorant, the parsimonious, the luxurious, the extravagant, the capricious, the passionate, the spiteful master. In a thousand ways may they be, and they daily are, tormented, which no law can provide against, no care can possibly remedy.

His distinction between political and domestic slavery, except wherein they respect different objects, is imaginary and inconclusive, when applied to individuals; or whatever difference there is, will be found to conclude against the latter. The great tyrant has not the opportunity of exercising his lust of oppression over individuals, except they stand opposed to his power; and a quiet man may, in an extensive country, pass his time tolerably easy and secure under the most arbitrary government. But the domestic tyrant can seize and torment every wretch submitted to his power, every moment of their lives. They cannot eat or sleep, but when and how he pleaseth. Every feeling, every indulgence, is held at his pleasure;

pleasure; and too often he feels a spiteful amusement, an infernal delight, in unnecessarily imbittering their miserable cup, even at the expence of his own ease and interest.

That the heavenly Preacher of peace and good will towards men, should be supposed to have encouraged an unnatural state of society, which, in its very institution, must counteract in the superior every benevolent inclination from man to man; and must go far to suppress in the inferior every desire after that intellectual improvement, and heavenly happiness, to point out the way to which was the very design of his humiliation; is such blasphemy against the divine goodness and condescension of his mission, and is so flatly contradicted by the whole tenor of his doctrine, as to be utterly unworthy of any answer. St. Paul again is pressed into the service of slavery, against the plain grammatical sense of the expression in the original, and the whole scope of his argument: of so much more weight than truth is the driving of a favorite point. After generally remarking, that, notwithstanding any supposed particular inconveniences, political happiness, by the extension of

of freedom, has been extended far beyond what the warmest imagination could conceive; we may allow churchmen in the company of their Master and his apostle, to rest satisfied with the blame of having been the means of abolishing slavery; and may hope that this writer's authority, in this case, may stand them in some stead against that more general reproach cast on them of their being the worshippers of power in whatever hands it is found.

By depriving a servant of property, as he proposes, we know, that, in fact, you make him careless and desperate. The best way of securing his fidelity and honesty, is to contrive that he may have property to care for and fear the loss of. If a slave has deserted the plantation, the most effectual way to bring him back is to give out, that you mean, if he does not return, by such a day, to pull his house down. He remarks that the Highlanders of his days were savage thieves and beggars, because subject to their chieftains; and would not his establishment of the like subjection in the civilized low-lands, ~~make~~, produce the like effects? A Christian would* resolve the silence concerning the poor in the

the heathen world, to their not being deemed an object either of history or philosophy; or to that common tie between man and man, which revelation inculcates, not being then acknowledged, to make the relief of their distress a matter of duty or merit.

But if no poor were then supported by private benevolence, was no misery therefore felt? What were the early seditions at Rome, but struggles between wealth and poverty, till war and distant conquest had enriched or drawn off the oppressed starving multitude? Indeed, where was there room left for public beggars, when the poor were slaves, and had only their own master to whom to cry for help? Yet the elder Cato turned out some beggars on the public, in a manner not greatly to his credit. Among the Jews, the rigours of slavery were softened by religion; and there the poor, from the first, were an object of law. Their law-givers informed them, that in their most flourishing state, there should be always poor among them, whom they were to consider as the Lord's pensioners, who were in his name to receive, from their wealthy neighbours, that tribute of grateful thanks which his goodness claimed

from

from them. And, doubtless, had this duty been proposed, from the like motives, in other states, proper objects of it would not have been found wanting.

A better reason to be given for the simplicity of the ancient manner of living may be found in the little communication which there was between different countries for the purpose of exchanging modes and superfluities. Those who live now on the produce of their own grounds, live as uniformly, and simply as the ancients did. But was the Roman mode simple after the conquest of Asia? He mentions the public works of the ancients, Do we know those of any state that in grandeur or utility may be compared to the floating fortresses of Britain, which carry the arms and power of the state around the world?

Why the public should build hospitals to receive slaves, worn down in the service of private persons, he gives not a reason; nor is any obvious. If the ancients were not troubled with the restless, ingratitude and pilfering habits of hired servants, did they feel no inconvenience from the sullen intractable disposition of slaves, whom they could not

get rid of? Or, if the desire of freedom excited the emulation of a slave, would it not make him also feel the immediate hardships of slavery? would he not, with despair, look around him, and view many slaves transferred from one master to another; often from good to bad, without acquiring that liberty which they had endeavoured to deserve by their fidelity? and would he not anticipate the like fate, and lose all desire of exertion? Is not this indeed the general case, at this day, in the sugar colonies?

Fletcher supposes that necessity will drive his country into the measure of slavery. It is near a century since he hazarded this opinion; and instead thereof, by the abolishing of jurisdictions, more liberty, and greater privileges have been communicated to it: and the consequence has been a more general extension of political happiness, and private conveniency. Had his plan taken place, would so many towns have arisen, or been enlarged in various parts of the country? Should we have heard of the manufactures at Paisly? Could Glasgow have been able to have endured a loss (even supposing it only temporary) of perhaps a million of money, by American independency, almost without

out once complaining? Would a few overgrown landlords have allowed the British army and navy to have been filled up and recruited out of their gangs of slaves, by the many ten thousands of Scotchmen, that in every war, since his time, have bled sometimes for the rights of the empire, sometimes to quiet the popular alarms, about that bugbear, the balance of power? Would oppressed, half starved slaves have made such hardy soldiers; or, like them, endured, without complaint, every various opposite climate, in carrying on the public service?

It is true Scotland still labours under disadvantages. The tenant is not sufficiently secured against the extortion of the landlord. But what would be gained by reducing a great proportion of these tenants and their posterity into the condition of slaves? Would they be allowed to live plentifully, when their lords wanted to parade it at court? Or are luxury and extravagance to be satisfied, while any thing within their reach remains to be devoured? If slavery had been established on his plan, would not power and intrigue have been used, to draw within its circle as many as possible, till master and slave had absorbed

every other rank? No, let laziness and vice be effectually restrained, even by restraining that liberty and privileges which they justly forfeit. But set not one man paramount over another. Let their country and its laws remain masters of their fate.

S E C T. V.

Master and Slave in the French Colonies.

In the French colonies, the public pays an immediate attention to the treatment and instruction of slaves. The intendants are charged with their protection, proper missionaries are appointed for the purpose of training them up to a certain degree of religious knowledge; and ample estates or funds are allotted for the maintenance of those ecclesiastics. The negroes, as soon as introduced into the colony, are put under the care of these last. The master is obliged to acquaint the governor or intendant, within eight days, of every African slave whom he has purchased, that a missionary may be assigned to instruct him. All the fasts and festivals of the

Romish

Romish church, which it is well known are very numerous, are commanded to be strictly observed, during which the slave is forbidden to labour, that he may have leisure to attend mass.

Every slave has a claim to a certain allowance of food and clothing, which is not to be diminished by their masters, under pretence of having given him time to work for himself. The power of the master is restrained to the whip and chain; he may not wound or mutilate his slave. On ill treatment received from his master, or on being deprived of his allowance of food and raiment, the slave is directed to apply to the King's attorney, who is obliged to prosecute the master forthwith. This officer is also bound to prosecute, if by any other means he hears of the abuse. This reason is added in the law, "This we will to be observed, " to check the abuse of power in the master." If a slave rendered unserviceable, through age, hurts, or disease, be turned adrift by his master, he is to be placed in the public hospital, and to be maintained there at the expence of his master. These are some of the regulations established by the Code Noir, to check the exorbitancy of masters; an in-

stance of attention and benevolence in the French government, that may well put British negligence to shame.

The respect in which marriage is held, brings a farther advantage to French slaves. The ceremony is solemnized by the priest, and the tie continues for life. This gives them an attachment to their little families, and a concern for their interest, and of consequence a care over them, and their own behaviour, that is seldom seen among English slaves; where the connexion between the sexes is arbitrary, and too frequently casual; where a male slave reckons it a piece of state to multiply his wives, and change them at pleasure, without looking beyond the present gratification, or considering how his conduct may affect the fate of his offspring. Care is also taken in the French islands to marry them young, in the same plantation; and if they perceive a particular attachment between two young people, belonging to different masters, it is common to resign or exchange them, that they may both have the same owner, and that marriage may have its full effect on their conduct.*

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* A gentleman of Guadaloupe, Monsieur Seguer, informed me, that, with some pains, he had brought it about to have all

The French slaves reap a considerable advantage from the presence of their owners. One cause of this is, that, in the colonies, they enjoy more liberty, and pay fewer taxes than in France.* An English planter, if out

all his slaves married within his own plantations; and that by making them all people of property, in allowing to each his bit of land, with a hog, a goat, and some poultry, and by some extraordinary pains used to instruct them, he had brought them to a degree of healthiness, good sense, tractability, and happiness uncommon among his neighbours. And I shall here remark, generally, that nothing has a happier effect in reforming or improving a slave, than the giving him something of his own to care for, and fear the loss of.

* The French governors have liberal appointments from the crown to set them above the necessity, and to take away the temptation of oppressing their people by extraordinary fees from them in the manner of our West Indian governors, who, to the disgrace of the government that appointed them, are forced to collect their maintenance in perquisites from those who have business with them. The British colonies are also made the property of patent officers, the profit of whose places consists wholly in perquisites, and is in general farmed from the principals in England by two or three substitutes in succession, till the immediate possessor be obliged, in his own defence, to commit acts of oppression, to make up his rent. And such is the corrupt influence at our court of these fine cure patentees, as to have procured a standing instruction to governors to oppose and render null every attempt made by provincial assemblies to regulate their fees of office, or check their extortion. Thus the government of the mother

out of debt, or a casual crop be plentiful, must run away to England, which he calls his home, where generally lost to every useful purpose in life, he vies with the nobility in entertainments, extravagance, and expence, while his attorney, and manager, are obliged to over-work, and pinch, his poor slaves, to keep up, or increase the usual remittances. It would make indignation herself almost smile to hear their piteous complaining letters to their agents read, when the necessities of the plantation have occasioned a small draught to be made on them. And often the manager, whom the caprice, or selfish, or family views of an attorney

country is deprived of the assistance of men of character and substance in public offices, to support its influence in the colonies; while these have imposed on them a most humiliating and burdensome badge of slavery, and have all their interests, and all improvements of their police sacrificed to the selfish views of men whom they never saw. It has also been usual of late years to permit the custom-house officers to hold their places by deputies, doubtless, to the great improvement of the revenue. The intercourse between our West Indian colonies is by small vessels carrying £40 or £50 freight. The custom-houses force full one half of this sum out of them, under the name of (not taxes but) fees. The consequence is, that when provisions or stores are unloaded in one island, they cannot, but in extreme necessity, be reshipped for another island,

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can, without warning, displace, looks not forward to the consequences of ill treatment of slaves, while trying to recommend himself by a forced exertion of their strength, in hopes that its pernicious effects may possibly not appear in his time.* If the English owner lives on his plantation, he is too often so involved in debt, or his own former extravagance, or of injudicious purchases, that he can spare little from the pressing demands of his creditors, to allot for the ease, and well-being of slaves, or indeed for any necessary improvement of his property. The French, as they generally live each on his own plantation, so they are happy in not having the credit, or opportunity which the English have of running in debt.† All their improvements must

* Hence a planter always knows the state of his affairs best, at the change of managers; it generally requiring many hundreds, sometimes thousands of pounds, to set matters agoing under the new director; an expence that might be saved by using a less parsimonious method in the ordinary management of the plantation.

† The whole debt owing by the Martinico planters about the year 1773 was estimated nearly at 200,000l. sterling. St. Christopher's, which, in proportion to its extent, is our richest colony, and may be in value about one-third of the importance of Martinico, though divided among fewer than 120 proprietors, could not owe less at that time than 720,000l. sterling.

arise out of their industry. They are therefore more gradual, and better founded, than in our colonies, where it has been only necessary to deliver into a merchant an exaggerated, pompous account of the richness of the plantation on which the money is to be raised, to procure liberty for drawing on him for thousands after thousands. Formerly industry, in a course of years, raised immense fortunes in the West Indies; few have been raised since loans became frequent in England. Borrowed money, seldom, one may say hardly ever, has succeeded, when in any considerable proportion to the property mortgaged for it. Let others explain the cause, I content myself with recording the fact. Thus French planters, not having interest money to provide, nor the ambition of retiring to Europe, to stimulate them in accumulating money, are not under the necessity of forcing their slaves beyond their strength, in carrying on their plantations to that exquisite degree of culture, that is common in our colonies, and which is effected, not so much by contrivance and method, or by increasing with proper care and nourishment the animal powers of their slaves,

slaves, as by obliging them to extraordinary efforts, that soon wear them out; and which, instead of allowing them to increase in the course of nature, make constant demands on the slave market, to enable them to support the character of the plantation. Far from planting, as we do, every rood of land that they possess, in sugar cane, and depending on foreign supplies for food, the French try to live as much as possible within themselves. A considerable proportion of land is set apart for provisions. A late edict has restricted the minimum to one acre in ten. Farther, the French plantation slaves are attached to the soil, and cannot be drawn off to pay debts, or be sold separate from it. This gives them a lasting property in their huts, and little spots of ground. They may safely cultivate them, and not, as in the British colonies, fear their being turned out of possession, or transferred from one proprietor to another, without regard had to their interest or feelings. From these circumstances, and from their manners being more communicative, the French, in the colonies, live more in a family way among their slaves, than our planters; they become more sensible of their

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wants and abilities; they naturally contract a regard and an affection for them; the slaves are not hurried in their work, and enjoy a greater plenty, and variety of wholesome food, than when their allowance of musty flour, or weavily maize from America, is dealt out to them from a scanty, bruised tin or pewter measure, by an unfeeling overseer; who perhaps recommends himself to his absent employer by the number of shares into which he has divided the wretched pittance.*

* Though the French government has cared thus humanely for slaves, though the manners and circumstances of the French planters peculiarly favour their good treatment; yet, since the temper of the master must still have great influence on the condition of the slave, this will not prevent, nor can we wonder, when we find, among the French, particular acts oppressive, and particular owners cruel. But in a vigorous government, such as is that of France, these acts cannot be frequent, nor these men numerous. On the other hand, we must acknowledge, that the free principles of our constitution counteract many of the ill effects of our scandalous neglect of the police of our colonies; and that the tyrannical nature of the French government prevents the French from reaping the full effects of their benevolent attention to the claims of humanity. Had we governors and other officers as disinterested as the French, and acting under the like benevolent instructions, the difference would be highly in our favour; and had the French governors the same principles to guide them as we have, the French colonists would enjoy a great accession of political happiness.

Now

Now the observation is, that the French slaves are more decently dressed, are more orderly, sensible, and ten times more honest than English slaves. They use private prayer. The field negroes begin and leave off work with prayer; the black overseer officiating as priest. This custom of having field prayers has been found so encouraging and useful, that many of the English planters in Grenada, on their becoming owners of French slaves, kept it up on their plantations; yet some of these would have mocked and sneered at the practice, if proposed in their own islands. In the French colonies even in their towns, there is hardly occasion for a lock to secure goods, or store-houses. In our colonies, no door, or lock, is a sufficient security for any thing which a slave can carry away. In Grenada, they have long bitterly complained, that since English slaves came among them, they can keep nothing safe from being purloined, and that even the honesty of their own old slaves has been greatly debauched.

S E C T. VI.

Master and Slave in the British Colonies.

To pursue the preceding observations, which candour obliged us to make in favour of our rivals, we must acknowledge, that an English slave has nothing to check him in ill doing, but the fears of the whip, and that is a weak restraint on a starving, craving appetite. The French slave is placed above the solicitations of hunger; and respecting his behaviour, has, to the dread of pain, superadded, as a guide, the hopes and fears of religion, and the approbation and displeasure of his priest. The French, in the treatment of their slaves, regard the suggestions of humanity, and enforce its dictates by their laws. The English have not paid the least attention to enforce by a law, either humanity or justice, as these may respect their slaves. Many are the restrictions, and severe are the punishments, to which our slaves are subjected. But if you except a law, that Governor Leake got enacted in Nevis, to distinguish petty larceny in slaves from

from felony; and a law in Grenada and Jamaica, that obligeth masters to allot to their slaves a certain portion of land for the growth of provisions; and one in this last island, that grants them Saturday afternoon for the culture of it; I recollect not a single clause in all our colony acts, (and I perused the several codes with the view of remarking such) enacted to secure to them the least humane treatment, or to save them from the capricious cruelty of an ignorant, unprincipled master, or a morose, unfeeling overseer. Nay a horse, a cow, or a sheep, is much better protected with us by the law, than a poor slave. For these, if found in a trespass, are not to be injured, but secured for their owners; while a half starved negroe, may, for breaking a single cane, which probably he himself has planted, be hacked to pieces with a cutlaſſ; even though, perhaps, he be incapable of resistance, or of running away from the watchman, who finds him in the fact. Nay, we have men among us, who dare boast of their giving orders to their watchmen, not to bring home any slave that they find breaking of canes, but, as they call it, to *bide* them, that is to *kill*, and *bury*

bury them. And, accordingly, every now-and-then, some poor wretch is missed, and some lacerated carcase is discovered.

Our countrymen are left, each to be guided by his own changeable temper, and to be influenced by a semblance of self-interest; nor have they any tie on them, in their behaviour to the wretches under them, but this interest, often ill understood; in some perhaps there may be a desire after a reputation for humanity, too frequently little guided by sentiment; in a few benevolence directed by conscience. Slaves are esteemed among us the intire property of their masters, and as having, distinct from him, no right or interest of their own. And our constitution has such an excessive bias to personal liberty, that in contradiction to the maxims of every well ordered state, it cannot, or will not, meddle with private behaviour. Hence that want of energy, vigour, and even propriety in every department of our police. Many actions pass daily unnoticed among us, that would have degraded the highest senator of Rome into one of the lowest tribes. Society professes to direct the actions of individuals to the greatest public good; a purpose to which all

all private interest and gratification should constantly be made to give place. Hence the true secret of police, after having secured the lives, liberties, and properties of the citizens, is to turn the conduct and industry of individuals to public profit, considering the state as one whole, and leaving private persons, each to find his own particular happiness in public prosperity, checking every appearance of a wayward disposition, that may make the man injurious to his neighbour, or unprofitable to his country. What a field do the British territories offer for such a plan of police?

Indeed, with this view before us, our boasted constitution presents only an uncultivated wild. How much remains undone in the various departments of commerce, of rural economy, roads, rivers, commons, government of towns, perfection of staple commodities, exclusive privileges, and the like? In the case of which we treat, the constitution lays no claim to the slave, but confines its attention to the intercourse of freemen, leaving citizens at liberty, as masters, to dispose of, and treat their slaves, with the same in-

E difference,

difference, if they please, with the same unfeeling wantonness, which without controul they may exercise on their cattle.

While we reflect on the state of slavery in our colonies, among the freest people in the world, and extend our views to the like instances in history, it becomes a mournful, an humiliating consideration in human nature, to find that those men and nations, whom liberty hath exalted, and who, therefore, ought to regard it tenderly in others, are constantly for restraining its blessings within their own little circle, and delight more in augmenting the train of their dependents, than in adding to the rank of fellow citizens, or in diffusing the benefits of freedom among their neighbours. Every where, in every age, the chain of slavery has been fashioned, and applied by the hand of liberty. Every ancient, every modern state gives shameful evidence of the truth, from the mock manumission of the Greeks, by the Roman Flaminus, to the oppressed state of the Dutch barrier, and their last Indian settlements, begun while they

they themselves were struggling for freedom.*

It will perhaps be alledged, that this inconsiderate treatment of slaves in our colonies may, as is generally supposed in Britain, be the effect of the illiberal turn of the colonists, accustomed from their infancy to trifle with the feelings, and smile at the miseries, of wretches born to be the drudges of their avarice, and slaves of their caprice. But it is to be remarked, that adventurers from Europe are universally more cruel and morose towards slaves, than Creoles, or native West-Indians. Indeed, whatever I shall have to say of the conduct of individuals to-

* The Athenians never admitted strangers to the privilege of citizenship ; Hercules, and one or two more, being the only foreigners indulged with it. This accounts for the short period of their once splendid maritime empire. It is true the Romans successively admitted their neighbours, according to their vicinity, to the privilege of citizens ; but they acted from no generous principle. They increased the number of tyrants, in proportion as their conquests added new slaves to be kept in subjection by them. Of this the social war is an undoubted proof. Yet this conduct, though springing from unworthy motives, was followed with the best effects, and gave stability to a state, that conquest otherwise might have ruined.

wards slaves, and the inattention of masters towards their claims, may be applied with more justice to the new settlers, than to the natives. Often attachment will secure from these last good usage, while the slave has no hold on the others; nay, probably is degraded by over-weening European pride, into a state differing but in name from brutal, by a treatment less generous, less considerate, than a horse or an ox receives from them. Oppression makes the wretches stupid, and their stupidity becomes their crime, and provokes their farther punishment. In particular, in the colony from which the following observations are chiefly drawn, so great is the proportion of Europeans in all its active stations, that the character of the community must be taken from them, not from the natives. And when one considers how these adventurers are usually collected, how often the refuse of each man's connections, of every trade, and every profession, are thronged in upon them, much sentiment, morality, or religion, cannot well be expected to be found within the circle of their influence. This must serve as an apology

logy for any thing seemingly severe, that may appear in the prosecution of the subject; to which we now return.*

The discipline of a sugar plantation is as exact as that of a regiment: at four o'clock in the morning the plantation bell rings to call the slaves into the field. Their work is to manure, dig, and hoe, plow the ground, to plant, weed, and cut the cane, to bring it to the mill, to have the juice expressed, and boiled into sugar. About nine o'clock, they have half an hour for breakfast, which they take in the field. Again they fall to work, and, according to the custom of the plantation, continue until eleven o'clock, or noon; the bell then rings, and the slaves are dispersed in the neighbourhood, to pick up about the fences, in the mountains, and fal-

* We must not confound every European settler in the above censure; sentiment, and benevolence, refined by education, influence several such within the author's acquaintance. Indeed, whatever there is generally amiss in the conduct of masters to their slaves, arises not so much from any particular depravity in them as men, as from the arbitrary unnatural relation that exists between them and their wretched dependents; the effects of which, neither sentiment nor morality can at all times prevent.

low or waste grounds, natural grass and weeds for the horses and cattle. The time allotted for this branch of work, and preparation of dinner, varies from an hour and an half, to near three hours. In collecting pile by pile their little bundles of grass, the slaves of low land plantations, frequently burnt up by the sun, must wander in their neighbours grounds, perhaps more than two miles from home. In their return, often some lazy fellow, of the intermediate plantation, with the view of saving himself the trouble of picking his own grass, seizes on them, and pretends to insist on carrying them to his master, for picking grass, or being found in his grounds; a crime that forfeits the bundle, and subjects the offender to twenty lashes of a long cart whip, of twisted leathern thongs. The wretch, rather than be carried to judgment in another man's plantation, is fain to escape with the loss of his bundle, and often to put up quietly with a good drubbing from the robber into the bargain. The hour of delivering in his grass, and renewing his task, approaches, while hunger importunately solicits him to remember

remember its call ; but he must renew the irksome toil, and search out some green, shady, unfrequented spot, from which to repair his loss.

At one, or in some plantations, at two o'clock, the bell summons them to deliver in the tale of their grass, and assemble to their field work. If the overseer thinks their bundles too small, or if they come too late with them, they are punished with a number of stripes from four to ten. Some masters, under a fit of carefulness for their cattle, have gone as far as fifty stripes, which effectually disable the culprit for weeks. If a slave has no grass to deliver in, he keeps away out of fear, skulks about in the mountains, and is absent from his work often for months ; an aggravation of his crime, which, when he is caught, he is made to remember.

About half an hour before sun set, they may be found scattered again over the land, like the Israelites in Egypt, to cull, blade by blade, from among the weeds, their scanty parcels of grass. About seven o'clock in the evening, or later, according to the season of the year, when the overseer can find leisure,

they are called over by list, to deliver in their second bundles of grass ; and the same punishment, as at noon, is inflicted on the delinquents. They then separate, to pickup, in their way to their huts, (if they have not done it, as they generally do, while gathering grass) a little brush wood, or dry cow-dung, to prepare some simple mess for supper, and to-morrow's breakfast. This employs them till near midnight, and then they go to sleep, till the bell calls them in the morning.

This picking of grass, as it is fitly called, often in a severe drought, when it is to be found only in the recesses of the mountain, thus thrust in by the by into the hour of weariness and rest, is the greatest hardship that a slave endures, and the most frequent cause of his running away, or absenting himself from his work ; which not only subjects him to frequent punishment, but actually renders him unprofitable, worthless, and deserving of punishment. He can neither refresh, or indulge his wearied body. He is subjected by it to injury. He is placed in the jaws of trespass, and unavoidably made obnoxious to oppression, and stripes. And yet

yet a few acres of land, in proportion to the extent of the plantation, allotted for artificial grass, and a few weakly slaves separated from the work, would take away the necessity of providing for cattle in this harrassing scanty manner.

This grass, except such part of it as is reserved for the stable horses, procured by so much toil, and forced out of the slave by such repeated punishment, under pretence of feeding the cattle and mules, is spread abroad under their feet, on a fermenting inclosed dung heap, called a pen. There a very considerable part is lost to every purpose of nourishment, by being trampled under the beasts feet ; where mixing with dung and urine, it ferments, corrupts, and with its suffocating steams in that sultry climate, instead of supplying them with vigour, fills them with disease ; as if Providence meant to revenge the oppression of the slave, in being forced to drudge thus for it, by inspiring the master with a spirit of absurdity, in his manner of using it.*

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* This pen is an inclosure, perhaps of sixty by eighty feet, in which, from thirty to fifty cattle and mules are kept and fed.

The work here mentioned, is considered as the field duty of slaves, that may be insisted on without reproach to the manager, of unusual severity, and which the white and black overseers stand over them to see executed ; the transgression against which, is quickly followed with the smart of the cart whip. This instrument, in the hands of a skilful driver, cuts out flakes of skin and flesh with every stroke ; and the wretch, in this mang-

fed. The decayed leaves, and offals of the sugar cane, are from time to time thrown in for litter. Their provender is spread over it, and being mixed with urine, dung, and rain, becomes a fermenting mass, which is emptied once, and in some plantations, twice a year. The disease generally fatal to mules, seems to be of the nature of a putrid infectious fever, which, if it does not arrive from, is at least heightened by, this absurd manner of feeding. The cattle being often staked out in the fallow grounds, are not so constantly exposed to these noxious steams.

Though a planter will readily pay 30l. sterling for a good mule, or a bull, and though chiefly from this scanty absurd method of feeding them, he be obliged to renew his expence from year to year; yet will he not allow a few acres for artificial grass, nor even a stall, a manger, or a clean spot, to save their small pittance of provender from filth, or to feed them apart from the foul exhalations of a dung heap, in its most unwholesome state. There have been instances of pens bursting out into a smouldering flame, while the cattle were feeding on them.

led

led condition, is turned out to work in dry or wet weather, which last, now and then, brings on the cramp, and ends his sufferings and slavery together.

In crop-time, which may be when reckoned altogether on a plantation, from five to six months ; the cane tops, by supplying the cattle with food, gives the slaves some little relaxation in picking grass. But some pretendedly industrious planters, men of much bustle, and no method, will, especially in moon-light, keep their people till ten o'clock at night, carrying *wowra*, the decayed leaves of the cane, to boil off the cane juice. A considerable number of slaves is kept to attend in turn the mill and boiling house all night. They sleep over their work ; the sugar is ill tempered, burnt in the boiler, and improperly struck ; while the mill every now-and-then grinds off an hand, or an arm, of those drowsy worn down creatures that feed it. Still the process of making sugar is carried on in many plantations, for months, without any other interruption, than during some part of day light on Sundays. In some plantations

plantations it is the custom, during crop-time, to keep the whole gang employed as above, from morning to night, and alternately one half throughout the night, to supply the mill with canes, and the boiling house with wowra.

This labour is more or less moderated, in proportion to the method and good sense of the manager. In some plantations the young children and worn out slaves are set apart to pick grass, and bring cane tops from the field for the cattle, and do no other work. Sometimes the field gangs bring both their bundles of grass at once, being allowed for that purpose a little extra time, during the meridian heat; which saves them an unnecessary repetition of wandering in the evening three or four miles to search for it, and enables the manager to employ the cool part of the afternoon in the common labour of the plantation. Sometimes they are dismissed for grass before the usual hour; or if they be hoe-ploughing land, frequently none is required from them. In some plantations, they are not punished for coming late into the field, if they appear there about sun-rise.

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In most well-ordered plantations, they leave off grinding and boiling before midnight, and begin not again till about dawn: it having been found, that the quantity of sugar made in the night, is not in proportion to the time; that it not only suffers in quality, but also lies open to pilferage; and that the mules, particularly the most tractable, and easily harnessed, are injured by being worked indiscriminately, in the dark, out of their turn; another valuable consequence, this of their being confusedly huddled together in that inclosed dung-heap, the pen: for the danger of grinding off a drowsy negroe's arm, or harrassing him to death, is a consideration which without these other circumstances, would hardly interrupt the grand work of sugar-making.

Every plantation contains little skirts, and portions of broken land, unfit for the cultivation of sugar. These are usually divided among the slaves for the growth of provisions; but where the master is inattentive, a few of the principal negroes often seize on, and appropriate to themselves, the possessions of the rest, and make the simpler sort labour for them; and many are so lazy, that nothing

thing but the whip, and the presence of the overseer, can make them work, even for themselves. There is such a ready market for all the little articles which these spots produce, that the industrious slaves of a few, though but a few, plantations situated near the mountains, where the weather is seasonable and favours the growth of vegetables, maintain themselves in clothes and food, tolerably well, by the sale of their various fruits, with little other immediate aid from their master, besides a weekly allowance of herrings. But, in far the greater number of plantations, the quantity of provisions, or marketable vegetables, is uncertain and trifling; and necessity and hunger will not permit the wretches, to leave them in the ground to ripen sufficiently. Hence many diseases and ruined constitutions, from this scanty, rude, ill-prepared food, used among them.

Formerly, before we became such accurate planters, and before luxury had rapaciously converted every little nook of land into sugar, the slaves had a field or two of the fallow cane-land yearly divided among them, for a crop of yams, pease, and

and potatoes; and a field of the best cane-land was annually put in yams, to be reserved for their weekly allowance. When our late North American brethren were pleased to threaten our sugar islands with famine, this custom began again to be renewed, and with such success as might have encouraged them, never, in time to come, to have made themselves as dependent on North America as formerly for their daily bread.

Some masters, now-and-then, give their slaves Saturday afternoon, out of crop-time, to till their spots of ground; sometimes will turn in the whole gang among them to weed and put them in order, under the direction of the overseer. But, in general, *the culture of their private patches, and the picking of grass for their cattle, are their employments on Sunday.* In the low lands these provision spots are hardly useful six months in twelve, from the usual dryness of the weather. Added to the produce of their own provision lands, and the casualty of a fallow field, the slaves have a weekly allowance of grain, varying in different plantations, from one to three pounds, under the nominal measure

sure of from two to eight pints. A few plantations go near to five pounds; one or two as far as six. They have also from three to eight herrings a week. In general, they are far from being well or plentifully fed.*

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* The practice of turning all our lands to the growth of the sugar cane, and neglecting the culture of provisions for the slaves, and of artificial grass for the cattle, has lately arisen equally from the demands of extravagance in our absent planters, and of poverty in those on the spot. Sugar, sugar, is the incessant cry of luxury, and of debt. To increase the quantity of this commodity, gardens of half an acre have been grubbed up; and that little patch, which he had used to till for his own pease, or cassava, has the slave been made to dig for the reception of his master's sugar cane. Nor has the little skirt of pasture, or half rood of artificial grass, been more spared in this universal sacrifice to would-be greatness; while the poor slave must attempt to make up for this, and every other want but his own, by exertions taken from the hour of weariness and hunger. Hence the annual expence of plantations, within less than thirty years, has been more than doubled. Hence the sending of two or three extra casks of sugar to market has been attended with an expence of hundreds of pounds in provisions to slaves, in oats to horses, and in keeping up the stock of slaves and cattle, worn out, before their time, by indiscreet extraordinary efforts, and a scanty allowance. The peculiar fertility of St. Christopher's has the most baneful effects. It enables the greatest part of its proprietors to live in England; where, insensible of the sufferings of their slaves, they think and dream of nothing but sugar, sugar; to which, in consequence, every spot of land is condemned. Hence grass is procured there with more difficulty,

They have an yearly allowance of two or three yards of coarse woollen cloth, called bamboo, to which sometimes is added for the men a woollen cap, for the women a hand-kerchief, and perhaps a few yards of Osnaburghs. At Christmas three holidays are pretended to be given them; but generally Sunday is foisted in for one, and now-and-then half of Christmas-day must be employed by them in digging yams for their allowance, and in receiving it afterwards, with a pound or two of salt-fish, or a scrap of coarse Irish beef. In Jamaica they have also two holidays at Easter, and two at Whitsuntide.

Their huts are framed of island timber, cut by each man for himself in the mountains, and carried down by him and his wife on Sundays. Sometimes the owner will supply a board or two to make a door or window shutter, but, in general, such materials are stolen; nails and hinges are either stolen or bought from those who have stolen them. This often happens on a plantation

ficulty, and the slaves are more scantily fed, than in the other islands; and the managers are obliged to keep them up to their utmost possible exertion to preserve their employment.

where perhaps a thousand pounds sterling have been expended on a stable for a set of English horses. Indeed English horses are the least necessary, yet best attended, best served, best lodged, and most expensively kept, animals possessed by a sugar planter.

Negroes bred to mechanic employments, to sugar boiling, and the like, and some domestic slaves, fare much better than those who work in the field. They have opportunities of retaliating on their master for his penurious treatment of them, by purloining from him; and they often supply themselves with necessaries by little useful jobs in their several trades. Slaves in the neighbourhood of the towns drive also a considerable trade with the inhabitants for grass and cane tops for feeding their horses.

A surgeon is generally employed by the year to attend the sick slaves. His allowance per head varies from fourteen pence to three shillings; in a few instances it rises to three shillings and six pence sterling, besides being paid for amputations. Some frugal planters trust to their own skill, and James's powder, and Ward's pill; and, then, for the most part, a surgeon is only called in to pronounce them past

past recovery. The food of the sick is often musty, indigestible horse beans, sometimes maize, flour, or rice; sometimes, as a dainty, brown biscuit. On some plantations, the manager is allowed to get, now-and-then, a fowl, or a kid to make soup for them. Sometimes the owner sends the manager a cask of wine, a few glasses of which are supposed to be for the use of the sick. Where the manager is a married man, the sick often have a mess from his table, and caudle, tea, and other comfortable slops; and his wife superintends the conduct of the nurse, and sees that the pregnant and lying-in women be properly taken care of. But the custom of employing married men on plantations is wearing fast out. Though married managers alone can take proper care of the sick, though they stay more constantly at home, and have numberless other advantages over single men, in point of character, faithfulness, and application; yet planters have determined it to be better to employ perhaps a dissipated, careless, unfeeling young man, or a grovelling, lascivious, old bachelor (each with his half score of black or mulattoe pilfering harlots, who, at their

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will, select for him, from among the slaves, the objects of his favour or hatred) rather than allow a married woman to be entertained on the plantation.*

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* The pretence of this encouragement given to profligacy, is, that a family requires more attendants, and consumes more sugar than a single man; but the contrary is the fact in a very high degree; and there is not in the single man the attention, and persevering care of a sensible woman, (such, in an highly useful degree, is almost every manager's wife whom I know) in things within her province, which, even, were the assertion true, would more than balance the account.

I mean not to comprehend every single man in the full extent of this censure. Some shew the wretches under them every mark of attention that their own solitary state leaves in their power. But all must pass through the hands of some inconsiderate boy overseer, or some unfeeling black or mulattoe concubine. And where the single man is a gadding, gossiping reveller, (a character sometimes to be met with) inconceivable are the miseries to which the slaves are subjected. The necessaries, where any are allotted for the sick, (and heaven knows, on the best plantations, they are trivial enough!) are devoured as a morsel, by that legion of harlots and their children, with which the plantation abounds. Often, while the manager is feasting abroad, careless and ignorant of what has happened, some hapless wretch among the slaves is taken ill, and unnoticed, unpitied, dies, without even the poor comfort of a surgeon, in his last moments, to say, "It is now too late." When the unripe female slave has become the new object of the manager's attachment, she becomes an object of envy to the more experienced dames that have gone before her, and must think herself lucky, if she pays not with her life the forfeit

In the year 1774, or before the American war, the several articles that a slave had annually returned to him out of his labour, were, in too many plantations, within the following proportion. In others, his allowance of food considerably exceeded what is here mentioned :

	£	s	d
Annual allowance of rice, flour,	{	12	0
maize, beans, or other grain,	}		
Ditto of herrings, and his fish, or	{	8	0
scrap of salt beef, at Christmas,	}		
Ditto clothing, - - - - -	{	3	6
Surgeon, quack medicines, and ex-	{	2	6
traordinary necessities when sick,	}		
Whole annual allowance	-	1	6

The ordinary punishments of slaves, for the common crimes of neglect, absence from work, eating the sugar cane, theft, are cart whipping, beating with a stick, sometimes to the breaking of bones, the chain, an iron crook about the neck, a large iron pud-

forfeit of her youthful attractions. In short, in the case supposed, shameless profligacy usurps the place of decency, sympathy, morality, and religion; and headlong unthinking lust alone produces all the wasting effects of dishonesty, cruelty, and oppression.

ding or ring about the ankle, and confinement in the dungeon. There have been instances of slitting of ears, breaking of limbs, so as to make amputation necessary, beating out of eyes, and castration; but they seldom happen, especially of late years, and though they bring no lasting disgrace on the perpetrator, have, for some time past, been generally mentioned with indignation. It is yet true, that the unfeeling application of the ordinary punishments ruins the constitution, and shortens the life of many a poor wretch.*

To avoid any misconstruction, I must here observe, that the labour, the diet, the punishments, in short, the general treatment of slaves, depend on the character of the owner

* In a certain colony, no less than two chief judges, within these thirty years, have been celebrated for cutting off or mashing (so as to make amputation necessary) the limbs of their slaves. In one case a surgeon was called in to operate; but he answered, he was not obliged to be the instrument of another man's cruelty. His honour had it then performed by a cooper's adze, and the wretch was left to bleed to death, without attention, or dressing. When he became convulsed, in the agonies of death, the surgeon was again hastily sent for, and came in time to pronounce him dead. People stared at the recital, but made no enquiry for blood. In the other case the limb was mashed with a fledge hammer, and then it was amputated by a surgeon, and the maimed wretch lived some years.

or manager; and that in some particular plantations (the grievance of picking grafts, and the circumstance of their being so long as sixteen hours out of the twenty-four under the lash of the whip, excepted) they enjoy as much ease and indulgence as are compatible with their present state of ignorance and dependence, and the accurate methodical cultivation of a sugar plantation. But this ease and this indulgence, though due from all masters to all slaves, are not deemed matter of right, but of kindness or favour; and too many are set over them, who want both humanity and discretion to see either the obligation or advantage of such treatment; too many who are too lazy to consult any principle but present caprice in their conduct towards them. I have heard managers boast of not having ordered twelve stripes in twelve months among 120 slaves. There are also managers who may boast, and there have been some who have boasted, of having given, every now-and-then, what they call a cool hundred for the slightest offences. Yet, were this last even a solitary character, in a community, he ought to be an object of

police, and be compelled to revere the claims of human nature.

We cannot pass over in silence the usual treatment of pregnant women and nurses. In almost every plantation they are fond of placing every negroe who can wield an hoe in the field gang; so fond, that hardly any remonstrance from the surgeon can, in many cases, save a poor diseased wretch from the labour; though, if method prevailed, work may be found on the plantation equally necessary and proportioned to every various degree of ability; and though one or two days attempts in the field be sure to lay them up in the hospital for weeks.

At this work are pregnant women often kept during the last months of their pregnancy, and hence suffer many an abortion; which some managers are unfeeling enough to express their joy at, because the woman, on recovery, having no child to care for, will have no pretence for indulgence.

If, after all, she carries her burden the full time, she must be delivered in a dark, damp, smoky hut, perhaps without a rag in which to wrap her child, except the manager

manager has a wife to sympathize with her wants. Hence the frequent loss of negroe children by cramp and convulsions within the month. A lying-in woman is allowed three, in some plantations four weeks for recovery. She then takes the field with her child, and hoe or bill. The infant is placed in the furrow, near her, generally exposed naked, or almost naked, to the sun and rain, on a kid skin, or such rags as she can procure. Some very few people give nurses an extra allowance. In general, no other attention is paid to their condition, except perhaps to excuse them from the picking of grafts.

Though slaves be now raised to a price that few old settled plantations can afford to give, yet this is all the care taken in most of them to raise a young generation; while Creoles or native West Indian negroes are universally acknowledged to be more hardy, diligent, and trusty than Africans. Managers, to whose care plantations are left, hold their places, as we have observed, by so precarious a tenure, that they too often confine their views to the making of the greatest present exertion that is possible, (which, indeed, their employers press them to do) without looking forward

forward to what may happen fifteen years hence.*

S E C T,

* Under the impression of this negligence, let me propose the remedy. Let two rooms be added to the hospital, one for the reception of lying-in women, the other for the sucking children, while their mothers are at work. The whole should be placed so as to be convenient for the inspection of the manager's wife, whom we esteem to be as necessary a person on a plantation as the manager himself; and who, on most plantations, may have sufficient employment in taking care of the keys in her husband's absence on business, or at courts, (many overseers not being trust-worthy) to see the sickly negroes fed, the infants properly taken care of, and the nurse do her duty in the hospital. For these and the like offices, in St. Croix, it is usual to give her a salary, distinct from her husband. Let two elderly handy women be chosen to attend the children, keep them clean, and feed them with spoon-meat. For the first six months, nurses should be kept at moderate labour, near the hospital, to be at hand to suckle their children, from time to time. After that period, they may go through the ordinary work of the plantation, except the picking of grass. They should have an extraordinary allowance of food both in quantity and quality. Every healthy child, presented to the master weaned, should intitle the mother to a complete suit of clothes. Every woman, that has three children at work in the field, should be excused all field work.

We have several plantations, where by care, and mild treatment, and a judicious, or casually just proportion between the sexes at first, the slaves increase from the births; and this might be the case in all, if the dictates of prudence and humanity were obeyed. To give an instance in point: there are two plantations, bordering on each other, of nearly the same extent. About twenty years ago they were nearly equally stocked

S E C T. VII.

Master and Slave in particular Instances.

It has been observed, that there is no law in the colonies to restrain the ill-behaviour or cruelty of a master to his slave. It is not meant to be insinuated from this, that the want of laws to secure good treatment to them exposeth them to all the ill usage, that may be supposed naturally to arise from such neglect. The humanity of many masters more than supplies the want of laws in every other respect, but that of improvement; the attachment of others has in them a like effect. In some cases, good sense, a regard for their reputation, and a well informed

stocked with slaves: on the one the allowance has been more plentiful, and the managers have been more considerate than on the other. Here the slaves are strong, hearty, and increased from the births. The other manager boasts of his pinching and saving: and that plantation requires an almost annual supply of eight or ten negroes to keep up the stock. And, till lately, that he, through laziness, and absolute neglect of his employers interest, as he understood it, has relaxed in his discipline, the slaves were a starving heartless crew. Indeed, at this time, none were left but such whose natural strength of constitution stood proof against excess of labour, severity of punishment, and the last tolerable degree of famine.

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food. Some years ago, his attorneys took the opportunity of his making a voyage to England, to give his slaves an allowance of grain, which has since been continued, and has gradually been raised from a scanty pound per week to nearly the common allowance of six nominal pints, that may weigh about two pounds and an half. Indeed, such was this man's original prejudice against feeding his negroes, and so unable were they, without feeding, to exist in a state capable of labour, that greatly to the lessening of his income, it was his custom to keep on making sugar, almost throughout the whole year, in a lifeless, inactive manner, in order that his slaves might have some subsistence from the cane juice. Before the period of which we speak, slaves had much more provision ground allotted to them, and, being less hurried by the overseers, were better able to cultivate. When luxury came in, like a torrent, among the planters, and seized with violence on the slaves little spots, and demanded the whole of their time, not leaving even to sleep its due, the necessity of providing other food for them from foreign parts was but slowly perceived, and thousands had

had perished before the loss was traced to its proper cause; and this man, of whom we write, was one of the last who was convinced that his slaves must be fed, if work was to be expected from them. Now can it be affirmed, that such a person would not have reaped an advantage from a law that should have directed him how to feed his slaves, or that slaves belonging to such a man would not have been happier in themselves, more profitable to their owner, and better and more useful members of the state, if they could have claimed the benefit of a law, I will not say to vindicate for them the common rights of humanity, but to secure to them the full exertion of their animal powers. And may we not add, that men so useful to society in their mismanaged state, and capable of being rendered infinitely more profitable, have demands on society for much better entertainment than a bit of salted herring, or a little raw cane juice?

And yet, had such planters as we have been speaking of the sense to discern it, wisdom would teach them a more liberal plan of policy, and make the dictates of humanity, or even of prudence alone, stand in stead of a thousand laws. A gentleman,

tleman, who lately died here, gave his slaves nearly double the proportion of food that is given by many, who value themselves on feeding them very high; and he frequently said, that could he afford it, he would increase their allowance still further. He parcelled out to them a larger proportion of his useful ground than most of his neighbours, for the cultivation of their roots and vegetables, and it lay more convenient for tillage. His slaves had all some little property, a hog, a goat, a trifle of money made by the sale of the produce of their little gardens, or of their weekly allowance of food; and they were all able to keep themselves decently clothed. He enlarged the gang to such a number, as not to be under the necessity of working them beyond their strength, or at unseasonable hours. In wet weather, he contrived to employ them near the works for the benefit of shelter; and they all had comfortable huts to receive them after the labour of the day. He allowed them to exchange their provisions for money, or any other species of food more agreeable to them, and it was to enable them to indulge their taste for variety, that he wished to increase an allowance, otherwise

wise sufficient for them. He seemed to have hit the medium between governing too much and too little: his people were always ready at command; but they had the full power of themselves and their time, when the plantation work did not employ them.

When he left off the purchasing of new slaves, he possessed about one hundred and sixty. In four years they were increased from the births to one hundred and eighty. In *eight years* he had lost by old age and chronic complaints about *ten*, and a few more by the natural small-pox, who, when the others were inoculated, were passed over, on the supposition of their having formerly had the disease. Some few infants were, I believe, also lost within the month; and the proportion of breeding women was small. The above is not the common proportion of deaths in any place. It is not an unusual thing on the same island to lose *in one year* out of such a number, *ten*, *twelve*, nay, as far as *twenty*, by fevers, fluxes, dropfies, the effect of too much work, and too little food and care. In some plantations of the like extent, it is necessary to keep up the gang by an almost annual addition of eight or ten new slaves.

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His whole expence for physic, during the three last years of this period, was within half of the annual allowance usually paid for such a number. Now, if we take into account the labour lost by the sickness of those numbers that must be taken ill, where many die, the expence of recruits, and the puny, weakly, inefficient state of the whole, where so much is suffered from inattention, the difference in point of interest between discreet and hard usage is great in favour of humanity.

Farther, in plantations, where slaves are ill fed, hard worked, and severely punished, it is a circumstance common for a tenth, and even as far as a fourth part of the working slaves, to go off and skulk in the mountains, some for months together. The culture of the plantation is interrupted by the loss of their labour, while they, by lying out in the woods, and learning there to eat dirt or clay, often contract disorders, of which they never recover. This gentleman, in the last eight years of his life, had only one slave who absented himself two days, on having had some words with the overseer, for having debauched one of his wives. These particulars taken together,

ther, are not despicable advantages of fellow-feeling and humanity; and if the like care was extended to the improvement of their minds, they, who were so well cared for in what respects the body, might in time be brought to pay some attention to what concerns the soul.

It is pleasant to record such an instance, and, did I not fear to awaken detraction, I would, in order to humble European pride, celebrate him by name, as a Creole of at least four descents, the friend of the author, and a man of more considerable humanity in private, and more comprehensive generosity in public life, than (except in one or two cases more) has ever come within my notice. But this gentleman had chiefly in view the ease and happiness of his own slaves: perhaps an example, where profit is the object, may be more convincing. A young man has the care of a considerable plantation in the neighbourhood: his character depends on its thriving condition, and the profitable returns made to the absent owner. The slaves, when he took charge of them, were a puny weakly gang, and fewer in number than in other plantations of the same extent. The

plantation is particularly laborious, yet the work is more forward, and better finished, the slaves more healthy, the deaths fewer, the crops greater, the rum in an higher proportion, and the sugar better and higher priced, than in the plantations around it.

This is the secret of his management. He is a slave to method. If once he hath taken public notice of a trespass against the established discipline, he never pardons, except when, in a particular case, he obliges the culprit to find some reputable fellow-slave, to become security with him for his good behaviour. He attends carefully to his own duty, and therefore few under him dare to be negligent; so that he seldom has occasion to correct. The trial of all trespasses, and dispensation of punishments, are held in presence of the gang. The sentence is accompanied with a public explanation of the fault, and an exhortation to avoid it; and often the contempt and reproach of the culprit's fellows make the severest part of the correction. If the whole gang has behaved remarkably well, throughout the week, he distributes some little reward among them, or, if the work permits, gives them Saturday afternoon to them-

themselves. If a slave has been remarkably diligent, he gets some money, a bit of beef, or other trifle on Sunday. Sometimes he affects to discover remarkable diligence in a lazy slave, and rewards it as if real, and thus encourages him to exert himself, and excites those who despised him, still more to out-do him. If two or three behave remarkably ill, the usual indulgence or reward is withheld from the gang. This makes them become guardians of each other's conduct, and fear the scorn and resentment of their companions, more than their master's power. He embraces every occasion to harangue them on their duty, and on the advantage of obedience, and good behaviour; and this custom has insensibly introduced among them the seeds of sentiment, and moral distinction. Their allowance of food is double to that of plantations where they pretend to give the same number of pints of grain. When they hole, or hand plough, the land, they have an extraordinary allowance of food, and are indulged with rum and water to drink. The sick, and their nurse, are put under his wife's direction, and any remarkably puny negro is employed about the house and kitchen.

C H A P. II.

The Advancément of SLAVES would augment their Social Importance.

IN the preceding chapter, we have contrasted slavery, as it has been variously enforced among different nations, over the unfortunate, with those ranks, into which society naturally, and profitably, separates its members. In this last state, we observe a rule originating in our constitution, by our Creator's will, that leads on each individual from his own security and happiness, to form the happiness and security of the community to which he belongs. In the other, the capricious will of individuals is the only law of their dependents, and, without once consulting their welfare, concludes all their feelings, and all their dearest interests. And all masters, in proportion as they themselves

selves are free, are, for their mutual profit, conspired together to rivet, and extend the chains of slavery, as far as their power extends.

This unnatural state of mankind has, more or less, departed from the dictates of humanity, in proportion as the disposition of masters, and the views of legislators, have overlooked or considered the general rights of mankind. The customs and manners of different nations have, in some instances, softened the lot of miserable slaves ; in others have encouraged the head-long cruelty of masters. But in the British plantations, the insolence arising from the keen sense of our own freedom, (and yet why should not a keener sympathy with suffering humanity operate on our feelings) and the incessant demands of luxury, and extravagance, that make themselves to be heard, and obeyed from the capital a-cross the vast atlantic, have there sunk human nature down to the lowest depth of wretchedness. Hunger, mistrust, oppression, ignorance, produce in the slaves worthlessness, and crimes ; and the avarice and cruelty, that contrived the faults, exact punishment for them with as much effrontery,

frontery, as if they who made them slaves, and thereby deprived them of every virtuous feeling, and every spur to emulation, were not answerable in their own persons for the base effects. Do we wish to form adequate notions of their misery? Let us imagine (and would heaven it were only imagination!) masters and overseers, with uplifted whips, clanking chains, and pressing hunger, forcing their forlorn slaves to commit every horrid crime that virtue shrinks at, and with the same weapons punishing the perpetration, not to the extremity indeed that nature can bear, but till the whole man sinks under them. But to make the representation complete, we must also draw humanity, bleeding over the horrid scene, and longing, eagerly longing, to be able to vindicate her own rights. Still, whatever she may urge, it will have little weight, if avarice or luxury oppose her claim. We are exceedingly ready, it is the turn of the age, to express ourselves sorrowfully, when any act of oppression, or unjust suffering, is related before us; the generous sentiment flows glibly off our tongues, charity seems to dictate

dictate every sympathizing phrase, and vanity comes cheerfully forward to make her offering. But whom shall we find willing to sacrifice his amusement or his pleasure, to obey the call of humanity? Who to relieve the sufferings of the wretched slave, will boldly encounter the oppressor's rage, or offer up selfish interest at the altar of mercy? Why, then, hath the active zeal of the benevolent Mr. Granville Sharp, and a few others, in the busines that we now agitate, hitherto made the unfeeling indifference of our age, and nation, but the more conspicuous?

We must not therefore stop at gaining over humanity to our side, but go on to shew, that society is deeply interested in advancing the condition of slaves, and that it would even be for the benefit of their immediate masters, that they should be subject only to the laws. As the cravings of luxury and extravagance have of late begun to make inroads, even on the slave's partial respite from toil on the sabbath; we will, in the mean time shew, till this much-to-be desired freedom can be brought gradually about,

about, how much the master sins, not only against heaven, but his own immediate interest, when he forces his slave to toil for him on this sacred day. And so low is their state, that we shall not intirely lose the purpose of this undertaking, if we vindicate for them only their legal claim to this indulgence. To make the reader the better acquainted with the subject of our inquiry, we will premise a short account of the present importance of the slaves in our sugar colonies. And we hope to leave selfishness, and private interest, without excuse, for continuing the heavy yoke which now oppresses them.

S E C T. I.

Their present importance to Society as slaves.

In treating of this subject, the author finds a difficulty in suppressing his feelings. How shall a man, who is firmly convinced that religion, and law, must go hand in hand, and extend their influence over every individual, in order to secure the full purposes

poses of society, pass over, without censure, a conduct both in governors and people, which, respecting our colonies, is wholly regardless of these important points ; even among those, who have always been acknowledged as citizens ? All civilized states, hitherto, have had an established religion. An established religion has a strong influence on every mode that is tolerated, though not established. The church of England, particularly, is considered by all sober people, as the great stay of the constitution ; and it is a fact, that the enemies of the one always aim their attacks at the other. But in the places of which I write, with hardly one exception, neither is law animated by religion, nor is religion supported by law. Even common opinion has no check to oppose to the most scandalous crimes, nor does it operate to restrain the most indecent enormities.*

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* In this picture, I mean not a general charge of depravity, but of carelessness and indolence, that fix neither punishment nor disgrace on the greatest irregularities. When it is considered, that neither religion nor common opinion have any check in these islands on personal behaviour, it is not so surprizing

This observation of the neglect of all appearance of religion in the colonies is truly discouraging, and leads directly to this just and mournful conclusion concerning slaves: "That the government which pays "no attention to the moral and religious "conduct of its liege subjects, can be "expected to do but little for the im- "provement of slaves." In these we behold a wretched race of mortals, who are considered as mere machines or instru-

surprizing that many heinous crimes should shew themselves, as that they should continue to be confined to the smaller number in a country, where law attends to nothing but the security of a man's property.

It is indeed true of the inhabitants, that though some individuals may, and actually do, commit the most flagrant offences, not without punishment only, but even without blushing, yet they are in general much better than their rulers. Within these five years, the grand jury of a certain colony strove in vain to bring the complicated crime of murder and incest to a trial. The whole bench of justices, and king's council, without even supposing the man innocent, united to oppose the attempt, and protect the culprit, and were able to do it effectually.

Barbadoes is almost the only colony, where any tolerable degree of decency is preserved, respecting an established religion; and though there be many and grievous defects in its constitution and government, yet this circumstance gives it considerable advantages in point of decency and civilization above the others, especially the new islands,

ments

ments of our profit, of our luxury, of our caprice, without feelings, without rights, without prospects:—Despised beings, who have found no friend, helper, or protector; who have not influence with a legislature, that from year to year is employed in making acts in favour of horned cattle, and ascertaining the rights of partridges and dogs, to get a statute passed, (I will not say for their benefit as reasonable creatures, but) for their feelings and utility as mere animals, or instruments of labour; who cannot procure an edict to prevent the least particle of the unalienable rights of human nature from being wrested out of their possession, by the ignorance, prejudice, cruelty, revenge, and selfishness of untaught, inconsiderate men, their masters and their overseers. And this neglect they meet with from a legislature, whose chief constitutional purpose of assembling, is to dispose of their constituents money, and which, from a very natural inquiry, might have known, that while the slaves in our sugar colonies, exceeded not the fortieth part of the inhabitants of the empire, at the breaking out of the late war, they contributed,

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in that neglected state, perhaps nearly a sixth part of its then revenue: a proportion which might be considerably increased, if the condition of the miserable wretches themselves were a little improved.

As this is a bold assertion, it will be necessary to shew, on what *data* I proceed, in the discussion of a subject, in which exactness cannot be expected. I had made my calculations before America was declared independent, Ireland made a separate state, and Tobago, with all its improvements, given up to France; and it is a subject of too much chagrin, to adapt them now to our new condition.

The sugar colonies produce sugar, rum, coffee, cocoa, cotton, ginger, pimento, indigo,

The inhabitants of England and Wales are estimated at	7,500,000
Scotland	
Ireland	2,500,000
	11,500,000
B R I T I S H I S L E S, &c.	
North America Freemen	2,600,000
Slaves	400,000—3,000,000
Sugar Colonies Freemen	82,000
Slaves	418,000—500,000
Colonies	3,500,000
Empire	15,000,000
tobacco,	

CONVERSION OF AFRICAN SLAVES. 111

tobacco, aloes, mahogany, sweetmeats, &c. These valued all as casks of raw sugar, each of 1200 lb. at the King's beam, London, may be estimated in moderately productive years, as below. To complete the view, the inhabitants are added.

Islands	Free Inhabitants	Slaves	Staple reduced to casks of Sugar
Barbadoes	20,000	80,000	24,000
Tobago	1,000	8,000	6,000
Grenada and Grenadillas	7,000	30,000	36,000
St. Vincent's	4,000	15,000	10,000
Dominica	4,000	15,000	10,000
Antigua	6,000	36,000	20,000
Montserrat	2,000	9,000	6,000
Nevis	2,000	10,000	8,000
St. Christopher	3,000	27,000	20,000
Anquilla, Tortola, and its Dependencies	3,000	14,000	10,000
Jamaica & its Dependencies	30,000	174,000	100,000
<hr/>			
Total	82,000	418,000	250,000

The sugar baker in Britain pays for sugar, the chief article, from £24 to £30 per cask. Hence the value of the staple is seldom below £6,000,000 per annum. The slaves estimated at £50 each will exceed the sum of £20,000,000. The lands, buildings, and other

other stock, may be set down at twice this sum, or £40,000,000. We have then the West-Indian stock, exceeding £60,000,000 and giving a yearly produce of £6,000,000 About £1,000,000 of this last comes into the exchequer, for duties on sugar, rum, &c. And there cannot be less than £800,000 raised on the trade of the islands, and on the planters, who reside, and spend their fortunes in England. The freight, agency, lighthouse money, storage, insurance, and other incidental charges, are a full million more of gain to Britain. And as the whole is put in motion, and draws its worth from the labour of slaves, it clearly proves their present importance, and their claim to national attention.

Indeed, the whole balance of their annual produce may be supposed as remaining with Britain. For there is not reserved in the colonies, a part sufficient to make the necessary improvements, in many cases, not even to keep up the stock. And even what is spent in the islands, is laid out in the purchase of British or American commodities; but much the largest share is kept in

in Britain, to be spent, or to pay the interest of five or six millions of money due there. In short, they may be considered as manufactures established in convenient distant places, that draw all their utensils from, and send all their produce to, the mother country.

I have supposed the medium produce to be £6,000,000, as the prime cost in Britain; but after passing through the hands of the manufacturer, it must cost the consumer full £8,000,000.

S E C T. II.

Their present importance to Society would be increased by Freedom.

From this view of the importance of our slaves, in their present state, (for they alone stamp a value on West-Indian property) it will clearly follow, that to improve and advance their condition in social, to encourage and instruct them in moral life, would be as politically profitable, as it is religious and humane. Were their condition advanced, they would become more worthy, more valuable

luable subjects. They would produce much more by their labour, and agreeably to that great purpose of modern police, financeering, by the consumption of more manufactures, they would increase the public revenue.*

Instead of confining their demands, as at present, to a few coarse woollens and Of-naburgs, to a little grain, a few herrings, and salt-fish, they would open a new traffic in every branch of trade, and while they improved our commerce, they would add to the strength and security of the colonies. The few, who by accident, or indulgence, have been advanced in social life, make even now a considerable addition to the internal consumption of the white inhabitants. And how much to be preferred, a numerous free peasantry is to a few over-grown fa-

* A French author sneers at Boyle, for proposing to propagate Christianity among savages, with a view to make them wear clothes, and thereby increase the demand for English manufactures. Perhaps he aimed to catch men, by the bait of interest, who were dead to sentiments of religion and humanity. Still the observation shews, how much a progress in religion draws after it social advantages, and civilization, of which the Moravian missions in Greenland are a most convincing proof.

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milies, and their herds of naked, half starved slaves, is too evident to need explanation.

There are about 30,000 inhabitants in St. Christopher's, of which not more than one in ten is free. They are in dread of insurrections in time of peace, and in time of war are exposed to every sort of depredation ; every pitiful privateer, while hovering around, alarming the coast, and endangering their safety. For at these times the slaves, far from adding to their strength, weaken and diminish it. But if all the inhabitants were free, and had property and families to fight for, what should they have to fear, who could draw out full 8000 hardy men, habituated to the climate, and, within five hours, have them ranged in order against any enemy that might assail them.

That sugar may be made by white labourers, appeared in the first settlement of our islands, especially Barbadoes. In the most flourishing state of that Island, the sugar-cane was chiefly cultivated by white servants. It has sensibly and gradually decayed in trade and importance, since the majority of its inhabitants has been changed from free-men to slaves. The stock of the planter

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has indeed been increased with the number, and the price of his slaves ; but his neat produce has not kept pace with it. Even after this island had been some time on the decline, one plantation (*the Bell*) fitted out a company of soldiers for the expedition formed in 1691, under Codrington, against Guadalupe. If there be now on the same spot, four white men, including the proprietor, able to bear arms, it is a great proportion. From this we may judge, how much the island has since lost in trade and security, even after allowing largely in the calculation. Yet it continues to support a greater proportion of free-men than our other islands.*

To this instance of making sugar by free-men, we may add the example of Cochin China. It supplies the populous empire of China with sugar, made by free-men. The quantity exported is estimated at 800,000,000

* About the time of the restoration, the island of St. Christopher contained about 10,000 French and English, capable of bearing arms. About 1750, Nevis could arm above 5000. The whole present militia of both islands exceeds not 1000. Such a destroyer is slavery of population.

pound,

pound, or about 500,000 of casks, which greatly exceeds the quantity of sugar made in the ifles, and continent of America, by African slaves. And this quantity may be supposed capable of being greatly increased, if the manufacture was carried on in the same accurate manner as in the European colonies. For, according to Le Poivre, the cane juice is only boiled into syrup at the place of growth, and in that state is carried to the several towns, to be sold to the sugar baker, who boils, refines, and candies it. After this tedious proceſs, brown sugar is sold at 3s. 4d. per hundred pound, white sugar 6s. 8d. and candied sugar at 8s. In our islands brown sugar is worth by the 100 pound, from 20s. to 36s. sterling, and yet many of our proprietors cannot pay their interest-money, and support their stock, without supposing any share of the produce to be allotted as the returns of their own capital..

S E C T. III.

Their Masters would be profited by their advancement.

It might be difficult for government to form a plan, that should at once extend full liberty to, and thereby bestow due rank on our slaves, without immediately indangering the property of their masters, and of the trading part of the nation connected with them in business and interest. And it must be acknowledged, that such at present is the ignorant, helpless condition of far the greater part of the slaves, that full liberty would be no blessing to them. They need a master to provide and care for them. The plan, proposed to advance and instruct them, must be gentle, slow in its progress, keeping pace with the opening of their minds, and looking forward for its completion to a distant period.

The slaves, in that little spot, St. Christopher's, moderately appraised, would exceed £1,300,000, and as they are part of a stock of £4,000,000, and give effect and life to that

that stock, the fruits of their labours being in most years worth to the consumers, £700,000, it is evident that an immense change or rather annihilation of property would be occasioned, if this scheme took at once effect in the colonies ; nor would it be possible to find the masters an equivalent.

While I acknowledge this in favour of the master, as things are now situated, I am firmly of opinion, that a sugar plantation might be cultivated to more advantage, and at much less expence, by labourers who were free-men, than by slaves. Men who, like slaves, are ill treated, ill clothed, and worse fed, who labour not with any view to their own profit, but for that of a master, whom for his barbarity they perhaps abhor, have not strength, nor spirits, nor hope to carry them through their task. A free-man, labouring for himself, in the earning of his wages, whose food is portioned out by himself, not by an unfeeling boy overseer ; who feels his own vigour, who looks forward to the conveniences of life as connected with his industry, will surely exert more strength, will shew more alacrity, than a

starved, depressed, dispirited wretch, who drawls out his task with the whip over him.

It is a common day's labour, where the work is carefully performed, for thirty grown slaves to dig with hoes, in a loose gravelly soil, an acre of ground, into holes of five feet by four, from about seven to twelve inches deep, leaving spaces between the rows equal at least to half the holes, untouched, to receive the mould. The share of such a piece of work to one slave, will be a spot of nearly fifty by thirty feet, including the untouched spaces. A task this, that might be more than doubled, by a labourer of ordinary strength, having spirits and inclination to the work.

In St. Christopher's, 16000 slaves, all capable of some labour, are employed in the cultivation of about 11000 acres; for the whole cane-land of the island is about 22000 acres, and each field gives a crop once in two years. This is in the proportion of three slaves to the annual culture of two acres; a rate that would be unnecessary among free-men, and which the British prices for West-Indian produce could alone support.

port. It may be remarked, that this labour has no winter cessation.

The common appraisement of prime field slaves, before the American war, was £60 sterling each; the annual rent of a slave was from £6 to £8. The renter ensured them, if valued, at five per cent. or £3 more. A plantation slave costs the employer then, without reckoning food, clothes, physic, or taxes, full £10 per annum, or one sixth part of his appraised value. A number of slaves, capable of producing on a plantation, well furnished with live stock and necessary buildings, 100 casks of sugar, annually at a medium, making but a moderate allowance for their deaths in seasoning, if bought from the slave-merchant, will amount on value, to £6000. In the new islands, before such a number could be relied on, they have in every case cost much more; in one, within the author's knowledge, above the double of this sum. The quantity of sugar here supposed, and the rum arising from it, in most situations will not keep the plantation in necessary stores, and pay the current expences, and supply a fund to answer such accidents as hurricanes, blasts, fire, mortality,

lity, and unfavourable seasons, and also give £1200 to the proprietor, as the produce of his lands, buildings, slaves, and other stock.

If his slaves be considered as rented from another man, and he insures them to the owner, £1000 of this £1200 is immediately to be struck off, as the value of the slaves labour. There remains to the proprietor £200, as the return of his lands, buildings, and cattle. In such a plantation the buildings often have cost £3000 sterling, sometimes more; the cattle, horses, and mules must be worth from £600 to £1000. Perhaps the proprietor has paid from £10,000 to £12,000 for the lands. The reader may be assured this is no ideal calculation, but in the island of St. Christopher, though our most productive sugar colony in proportion to its size, has frequently come within the author's observation. And is labour so injudiciously laid out in any other part of the world? Can any reasons be given, why a sugar planter should prefer the employing of slaves to that of free-men, seeing with a large diminution of returns, he may have a much larger clear income than at present.

present. An argument, that when duly weighed, renders our expectations of the extension of liberty, though distant, not extravagant.

But we will consider the policy of employing slaves purchased with money, in another point of view. In a free country, a peasant in general executes twice the work of a slave in the sugar colonies; we might go farther, but this is sufficient for our purpose. On the other hand the peasant's food is more sound, more plentiful, his clothes more expensive than those of a slave; but not in proportion to the difference in value of their labour, perhaps not exceeding greatly the insurance, and other incidental charges of slavery. In general, this food and raiment are all that the peasant, as well as the slave, reaps from his labour, few of them raising themselves by their industry to a superior station; and when they do this, it is effected by superior industry, or keenness, and greater parsimony, rather than by extraordinary wages. The whole then of a peasant's labour (that proportion excepted, which the slave in a certain degree also claims from his toil) becomes

comes

comes the profit and property of his employer, as fully and truly as if he were a slave; with this difference in favour of the first, that the obligation, or tie between him and his master, ends with the day's, or year's labour, and draws no disagreeable or expensive consequences after it, to either of the parties.

Now from the superior progress of population in free countries, compared with that of those wherein slavery prevails, when a peasant dies, his place is immediately supplied in the course of generation; the employer suffers no damage, or loss of time; and while labour and improvement go equally on, even the public, to which every person in a free state may be said to belong, is not sensible of the event. In short, in a free state, the death of an individual is like a stone cast into the water, it makes a sudden separation of the parts, but the water closes on it, and settles into a smooth surface, as if no accident had preceded. But to his master, the death of a slave is a sensible, severe loss, which he must immediately repair, at an heavy expence, that, after being incurred, will not make him the same profitable

fitable returns, as the labour of a peasant for which he pays (and that not till after the execution of the work) only such a value as he ought to expend in the maintenance of his slaves. The estimation of useful slaves, without taking lust, caprice, or favour into account, is according to their trades and accomplishments, from £50 to £300 sterling. Hence the death of a valuable slave becomes a most serious matter to the master, while a peasant, or tradesman, will do him superior service, without original expence, or daily risk to him, or to the public.

This is a view of the subject, and a manner of reasoning in it, which cannot, I apprehend, be controverted, and plainly proves, that could we contrive a method of once getting over the first shock, which such a change would occasion, and set down free-men and women (who in the common progress of population, might support or increase their original number, in our colonies) in the room of slaves, we should lessen the nominal value of the necessary stock, contract the expences of individuals, and much more than double their present profit. Here, then,

then, we have an argument against slavery, which applies equally to the interest of the master, and the advantage of the public, and ought to gain a fair hearing for every plan, that proposes to lessen the numbers, and advance the condition of slaves. And were we not afraid of startling the imaginations of people, by the extraordinary assertion, we would not hesitate to affirm, that were the minds of the negroes once opened, and properly prepared; and were they in general confined to the cultivation of West-Indian produce, and the trades connected with it; and did government introduce from time to time, till things became settled on the new basis, at the expence of the colony, the necessary recruits; the general manumission of slaves would be attended with no immediate loss to the planters; and, by taking away the necessity of supplying themselves with recruits at their own expence, would be an important saving to them. Indeed, after one generation, recruits would not be wanted; freedom would *increase* faster than death *lessened* their numbers.*

* The reader will be pleased with the following sensible remarks of a gentleman of Barbadoes, on his perusing this section in manuscript.

A state of absolute freedom is indeed a revolution that we may rather wish for, than expect

Barbadoes, of all the West-Indian islands, can the least afford the immense expense of an annual supply of slaves. As the white inhabitants are numerous, slavery might be abolished in a few years, without an individual suffering by it. The majority of the inhabitants are indigent. There are numbers of slaves, who, having been taught trades, are become highly valuable, of whom, one, two, or a few, are frequently the only support of whole white families, who live in indolent poverty on the returns of their labour, and by their death find themselves reduced to the utmost distress, and incapable of doing any thing for themselves. If this sort of precarious property were not universally relied on, so as to have a general ill effect on the manners of the people, they would of necessity be forced to be more industrious in themselves, and more economical in their expences. If slavery were checked, the poor white people, who, at present, (from the circumstance of their living meanly idle on the labours of others,) are perhaps the most lifeless, inactive set of mortals, on the whole earth, would be obliged to exert themselves in the cultivation of their own, and others lands, and soon would perceive their constitutions and circumstances equally improved. The great land-holders would find their expences and their profits go hand in hand ; for they would pay only for productive labour. The most industrious labourers would command the best employment, and the most punctual pay would constantly have the preference. Thus punctuality and application would encourage each other, renew the face of the colony, and put the whip and chain to shame. It would be a great step towards this desirable purpose, if the introduction of slaves into the colony was prohibited by statute, and all acts that lay fines upon those masters who free their slaves, were repealed. Every method should be

expect for some time to see, though doubtless it is within the plan of providence, and of man's progressive advancement in society. It supposes a regard for religion, a looking beyond immediate profit, and a soundness of policy, foreign to the estimation, and opinion of the present age. To make the plan effectual, it should prevail in every European settlement; an event so little to be expected from the manners which now prevail, that a man would not venture the imputation of such extravagance, as the bare suggestion of it would be deemed. For could so many opposing interests be reconciled; and should a partial innovation take place, that present bugbear of European policy, the balance of trade, would be supposed to be in danger.

be used, that would induce the people to respect the institutions of religion, and wean them from that carelessness respecting them, which is so prevalent, and has such baneful effects on their manners. The slaves in Barbadoes are perhaps more ripe for these privileges than those of our other colonies; because the proportion of Creoles, or natives, is greater among them; they are more conversant with the free people, and are less pinned down than in other islands to digging the ground. It is certain, they have in their present state been at different times trusted with arms; corps of them have been formed, and on all occasions have discovered an alacrity that promised every possible exertion.

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But were slaves instructed in the simple precepts of religion; were they taught to distinguish right from wrong; did the law secure to them a more plentiful subsistence, more humane usage; were they permitted to acquire and enjoy property; were the rights of a family made sacred; could they look forward to freedom, as the reward of merit, or the purchase of industry; in short, were they considered as having some rights, some claims, as intitled to some of the unalienable, some of the reserved rights of human nature; their condition would in consequence be advanced, they would become more useful, more profitable subjects, and, might even be trusted with arms, in defence of the colony in which they have an interest. Indeed it is not their want of arms, but their good sense and moderation, in most colonies, that are a present security to the inhabitants. I forbear to say more on so dangerous a topic.*

S E C T.

* It is worthy of observation, that though the artificers in the King's dock yards had, from their first establishment, been

S E C T. IV.

Their Masters would be profited by allowing their Slaves the Privilege of a weekly Sabbath.

We have proved, that the gradual extension of freedom would have the best effects respecting

engaged, and liberally paid, by the day, yet within these twelve years, it has been found most expedient to employ and pay them by the piece, or job ; the men earning more, and the public getting more work, and that cheaper done, than in the former method, when they just drawled out the prescribed number of hours, and like Cyrus's well-trained soldier, would suspend the up-lifted axe, at the first stroke of the bell that called them off from their work. Good farmers also employ labourers, wherever they can, by the piece, and industrious men prefer it, as being mutually most profitable. In Kent, where there is the greatest variety of agriculture, almost every kind of work is paid for by the piece or job.

If moderate skilful planters would set down, and reduce into a table, the several rates of negro-labour, by the day, and a statute were enacted, that should give the slave, who had performed this task, the rest of his time to himself, or intitle him to wages for what he should do more than this ; and if all slaves were valued, and permitted by this their extra work gradually to buy out themselves, or their time ; and if it were only provided, that after they became free, they should continue to be employed about the business of a plantation ; in this situation, planters might have the original cost of their slaves repaid them, and would still have the same people to do

respecting both the master and the community. But it will require new regulations, and the consent of government and people, to establish the plan. What follows here has already the sanction of law, and is now the practice, in proportion to the discretion and fellow-feeling of the master. The infringement on that rest of the sabbath, which we wish to vindicate for the slave,

do their work better than at present, for food and raiment; only fewer in number would answer their purpose, and their interest would not be affected by any accident that befel them. The labourers, on the other hand, when their jobs were finished, would be their own masters, and be able to enjoy themselves, and their families. They would feel an ambition to become worthy members of society, and to partake, with their former masters, now become their patrons and benefactors, in the institutions of a religion, that considered them all as equally the children of the same benevolent Father. One immediate consequence of the relaxation of slavery, would be the introduction of ploughs, which have always answered wherever they have been tried, and are only thrown aside, because it is easier for a manager to order out a slave with his hoe in his hand, than to yoke horses or cattle in a plough. It is indeed a maxim, in carrying on all labour, never to do that by a man, that you can execute by a brute; nor to do that by an animal, that you can make a mechanical instrument perform. Thus all hand-hoe ploughing, except in particular cases, would be cut off, and all cattle mills for grinding canes would be exchanged for water or wind-mills. This method of working out freedom by labour is said to be established by a law in the Spanish colonies, for the encouragement of their slaves.

is an indecent breach, both of religion and law, while it counteracts, in no small degree, its own mean purpose of accumulation. But such is the progressive nature of the cravings of luxury and avarice, that if the custom once gets a footing, reason in vain will solicit an hearing; and religion has lost her influence, and law her authority, should they attempt to interpose. Our only hope remains in being able to pre-occupy the judgment. As this refers to a particular event in one of our colonies, which is too likely to take place in others, the arguments are presented to the public in their original dress; and those, who are best acquainted with the treatment that slaves usually meet with, will be least apt to imagine that the author has been too full, or too warm on the subject.

An Address to the Inhabitants of St. Christopher's, Anno 1775, shewing the Claim of Dependents to the Privilege of the Sabbath.

S I R S,

Within these last ten months, a custom has been introduced among you, of employing slaves

slaves in carrying on the ordinary plantation work on Sunday, of ploughing the ground, planting, weeding, and grinding the cane, boiling the sugar, and distilling the rum. It began on a particular plantation, and has found its way to each extremity of the island. It is true, it is not yet become general, and many planters firmly express their dislike of a practice, which, in itself impolitic and injudicious, bids fair, if encouraged, to banish humanity, and annihilate a religion that barely struggles for existence in our land. But bad examples are contagious; and seeming interest in some and emulation in others will go on, as they already have begun, to draw numbers into a custom that flatters industry, and feeds the hopes of extravagance and avarice.

No account of this spreading violation of our laws and religion having yet been taken by the magistracy, the trespassers are induced to believe that law cannot interpose to check it: a mistake which it is necessary to correct in men, who think nothing a crime but a deed for which law ordains a punishment. As it fell to my lot to take the first notice of this unhallowed practice, I have been obliged

to pay an attention to the subject; and hence I am enabled to assure these trespassers, who wrap themselves up in their impunity, that when the case is brought before a court, they will not find a lawyer, however profligate his private character may be, who will risk his professional reputation by undertaking the defence of so notorious a breach of human and divine laws: and could they find such a man, no judge or bench of magistrates could allow him to plead against the laws and religion of his country. Their defence must be confined to a single denial of the fact.

If we view the matter in a religious light, the sabbath is appointed by God for such pious, humane, and even worldly-wise purposes, as to lead us to conclude, that nothing will more readily draw down judgments on, nor sooner execute the ruin of, a sinful community, than a contempt of this benevolent institution. Sabbath-breaking makes a constant capital figure among the crimes that kindled God's wrath against the Jews. Farther, from God's strict injunction to them, from whom we derive this institution, to punish, even to destruction, any family

family or city that they should find guilty of idolatry among them, which was an offence simply against his authority; we may conclude, that if a community suffers an insult on this law of the sabbath, which has both his authority and general benevolence in view, to pass unpunished, it will, by such its neglect, subject to his wrath not only individuals that are actually guilty of the crime, but the magistracy and people at large, who are thus careless of vindicating his honour and the claims of humanity. I will leave it to yourselves, after what you have lately suffered in your sins, to determine what need you have to give the Governor of the world this new provocation against you. Woe be to that community which forces the Deity to resume the vindication of his laws from the hands of the ordinary magistrate. Undistinguishing ruin will involve the luke-warm professor and hardy trespasser together. May Providence, by your reformation, avert the evil which every thinking man dreads on your account. To contribute to this end, and set such right as have been unwittingly drawn into the practice, who yet have minds open to conviction, we submit to them the following considerations:

The good man, on the sabbath, interrupts his usual employments, not only to have leisure to review his conduct, to improve his mind for futurity, to reflect on, and bless God for his mercies, but also for the sake of his dependents: they are indulged with a respite from labour, and a weekly festival, which make servitude tolerable. This compassion is followed by its proper reward. Continual toil would wear out the constitutions of servants long before their natural period of decay; but, during this day of rest, they renew their strength, and the hopes of its weekly return make them chearfully undergo their common labour. The useful ox repays the indulgence in patient enduring.

Indeed, this day of rest, which God commands us to allow all whom he hath submitted to our rule, is an acknowledgment, that he obligeth us to pay for the dominion he hath granted us over the lower world. And, therefore, though the promulgation and extent of this precept rest on the positive command of God expressed in scripture, yet is the foundation moral: it is laid deep in the principles of humanity, grows up with obedience to our Creator, and flourisheth with

with equity and benevolence to our fellow-creatures. It is a mark of holding our power from God, a right reserved to himself, to shew his care of even the meanest of his creatures. And it teacheth us, in a manner plain for him that runneth to read it, that we had not our present rank in the creation bestowed on us, to be the unfeeling tyrants, but the merciful protectors, of the inferior world.

But as a contrary practice is now introduced here, with a parade, indeed, of superior industry, but a sovereign contempt of decency, common opinion, religion, and law; we must discuss this point of indulgence to dependents, and shew, (besides contradicting the motives above, which I hope have yet some influence among mankind) that he, who falls into so inconsiderate a practice, sins against prudence, and counteracts that aim after opulence, which can be the only pretence for so extraordinary, so alarming a conduct. In doing this, we need not enter into any nice physical disquisition concerning the animal powers of the labouring part of the creation, nor into any train of reasoning, to shew the necessity of a frequent succession of rest to labour to preserve the animal machine from wearing

wearing out before the period set by nature: we will appeal to your own experience, whether those men reap not the most lasting advantages from the labour of their oxen, their horses, and that still more useful, though neglected animal, called a negroe slave, who consult their several feelings, and give the signal to cease from toil, before the languid effort of weariness solicits respite. Are they the most successful in the field of industry, or do they most enjoy the evening of life, who constantly put forth all their strength, who rise early, and late take rest; or they, who so temper labour and rest, that each desires the return of the other. Look around among your neighbours, whose slaves, whose cattle, are the most healthy, or exert the greatest vigour; who suffers least by their mortality; who reaps most from their labour? Is it not he who encourages, favours, spares them, who properly nourishes them, and never encroaches on the hour of food or rest? Or can any temporary acquisition, wrung from unseasonable labour, compensate for an hospital filled with wretches dead or dying, for a crew of haggard, diseased spectres, whose
ruined

ruined constitutions, and famished looks, reproach the avarice of the hard-hearted master.

Is it said, in return, that the master buys this extraordinary labour, on Sunday, with an extraordinary price. Let me ask him, who gives this reason, would he push a generous horse, till the noble animal himself gave out? And is he to care less for a creature of his own kind, because anxious to recommend himself to his favour by a strained exertion of his strength? The master, by the very tenure of his authority, is obliged to consult the constitution of those who labour for him, that he may restrain their efforts within their ability, and keep their service to him within the limits of their own personal happiness. If, as some pretend, it be meant to increase the allowance of food, by this new custom of Sunday's wages, let them tell why, till now, they have provided so scantily for their slaves, as to make this addition necessary; or let them give a good reason why a wretch who drudges the six days for another man's luxury, should not eat plentifully, and have the seventh also for a day of rest.

If

If the planter says, he only bribes other mens slaves into his Sunday's service, let him go to his neighbour, and ask him for the use of his cattle, during the hours allotted for food and rest, and report his answer; or let him attempt to take them away, and work them clandestinely, and see whether they will not be reclaimed. And shall a considerate master, who works his slaves to their full ability; and who, it should be presumed, feeds them properly, suffer them to wear their strength out in another man's service for a little poultry hire, that ought not to be necessary for them? Or, if he did, could he expect them to exert themselves with vigour for him in the week, when their strength has been worn down in his neighbour's service on Sunday, and they have not had time to recruit it? God, who best knows the constitution of his creatures, and formed them expressly for labour, hath allotted for rest not only the nightly succession of darkness and weekly return of the sabbath, but has divided every single day into short intervals of labour and rest, by making a frequent repetition of food necessary for recruiting and refreshing the body. And shall we pretend to be wiser than

than he is, or to know better what the animal constitution is capable of performing?

One reason is given for this custom, which puts the observation of Sunday as a day of rest, on plantations, wholly in the overseers power: if a slave behaves to the satisfaction of the overseer throughout the week, he is to be indulged with Sunday, if not he shall work there on his master's field. And this humane reason is added, that the common punishment of withholding their usual allowance of food is injudicious, and therefore working on Sunday is substituted for it. I am ready to give up the propriety of starving men as a mode of punishment. But is not the obliging them to work on Sundays also to starve them; seeing, in the present pinched method of feeding them, every slave is forced to eke out his portion with his private Sundays labour? And doth not this extraordinary labour on Sunday act as a farther lessening of their allowance, by wearing out their strength in toiling on the day in which they should have had leisure to recruit it after the week's labour, while the means of acquiring food by private labour to repair this extraordinary waste are withheld from them.

But

But we give Sunday, as a day of rest to our slaves, in obedience to the command of our common Father. And nothing but a duty, superior in its consequences, and immediate in its call, or an unforeseen opportunity of doing an act of benevolence can set it aside. Now as a duty owing immediately to God, it cannot be affected by any pretended interest of our own, or demerit on our servants part. Are God's laws to be so little esteemed of, that every unthinking boy, set over a few helpless wretches, with a whip in his hand, may annul them at pleasure? Shall he, to punish a trifling offence against the plantation discipline, too frequently existing only in his own misapprehension or neglect, be allowed to make havock of the laws of religion and his own duty to God? Unhappy age into which we are fallen, when, leaving the plain road of obedience, we set up to reform the laws and religion, not of our country only, but of our God!

It is suggested further, that in crop time, in particular quarters, the ripe canes are so apt to become tainted, that it is a work of necessity to grind them off on Sunday. To this we answer, "The God of seasons enjoined

joined the observation of the sabbath, and his laws are ultimately for the benefit of the obedient." The circumstance here pleaded may be intended for an exercise of our trust in his Providence, but can never come under the description of those works of necessity or mercy, that are not only proper, but commendable on Sunday. Sagacity may foresee, prudence may provide for such accidents; method and good usage *may*, and where used, actually *do*, increase the tale of labour, on common days, far beyond what is forced out on this day appointed for rest. And were not this, which yet may be, in every case, true, yet God's veracity and providence are engaged that his servants should not ultimately suffer by their obedience. But, as we have remarked, and shall further prove, the truth is, this continued toil over-acts the purpose of industry, without supposing God, in his Providence, to punish the insult done to his laws and religion.

One reason is given for this practice, that carries a face of concern for religion, but is sufficiently absurd, and selfish in the application. "Slaves cannot keep the sabbath as Christians; and if not employed for their masters,

masters, will labour for themselves." Now the trifling Sundays works, in their own grounds, which an injudicious custom has permitted, and their scanty allowance of food has made necessary, is done in such manner and circumstances, as makes it more an amusement than a labour; nor can it be compared with toiling in their master's field under the whip of an overseer. But I can recollect a particular plantation, where the manager, some years ago, with a good intention, made the slaves exert themselves on Sundays, as much in their own ground, as in their master's fields, throughout the week; and the consequence was, that from this incessant fatigue, the plantation required a yearly supply of slaves, above a tenth part of the whole number maintained. Since they have been left to their own inclinations on Sundays, they have been most remarkably healthy; nor, I believe, had or needed a recruit these last sixteen years. The plantation is particularly well supplied with provisions; and the slaves have been treated with peculiar humanity and method.

But if slaves do not hallow the sabbath in a rational manner, cannot their masters and overseers,

overseers, by their own behaviour, sanctify it. And, surely to overlook what you cannot prevent in another, differs widely from the commanding of him to commit a crime, of which you mean to reap the advantage. That slaves cannot rationally keep the sabbath is matter of serious concern. I pray God we may not all be made accountable for it. Still allow this argument what weight you please; God is the God of the bodies as well as of the souls of his creatures, and he wills and attends equally to the welfare of both; and the sabbath is intended to refresh the one, and improve the other. Oxen and horses cannot keep a Christian sabbath; yet, their Creator respects their ease, and, among other purposes, appointed the sabbath expressly to favour it. And, surely, God doth not less regard the bodily sensations of human wretches, because in his Providence, for hidden yet certainly wise purposes, he hath hitherto suffered them to be immediately subjected to the caprice, the avarice, the cruelty of their fellows, though endued with keener feelings than the brutes, and greater sensibility of their claims. Farther, God accepts favourably what service and thanks his creatures are able

to pay him; and the simple rude way in which negroes, in their Sunday's amusements, express their satisfaction in his dispensations, will not be rejected, but be received with approbation and condescension to their weakness.

When we have made every allowance that charity or consideration can suggest, no man acquainted with the usual progress of human affairs, and the constant tendency of custom, but must see, in this unhallowed, hired, Sunday's labour, the hastening abolition of respect to that day, and of extraordinary hire for working on it. Poverty is craving; avarice insatiable; luxury boundless. And were Sunday once melted down into the week, men would try what more could be cut off from the darkness, and solitude, and rest of night.

But without taking into account the inhumanity, the immorality, the imprudence, the irreligion of the practice; what impudence, respecting society, doth it imply, when thus a private man sets his selfish opinion up against the laws of his country, and dares to insult them publickly, by acting in direct opposition to an express statute? How pregnant

pregnant in ill consequences must the example be, in a community where custom has reduced almost the whole of an established religion to bodily rest on the sabbath? Piety, soon, will not have a single thread of communication by which to lay hold on our practice. How necessary, therefore, to fix a mark on such profane conduct, before custom has stamped a fashion on it, and sanctified it? And often, for what is humanity, religion and law thus wounded? To answer the demands of extravagance, to fill the bags of avarice, to supply the funds of luxury. Slavery, in its mildest shape, has something dangerous and threatening to virtue; but when the very marrow and blood of our fellow creatures are exhausted in the cruel service of avarice or sensuality, the equal Father of all must call in some dreadful vengeance to punish the abuse.

I mean not so much to reflect on individuals, who may already be guilty of this unfeeling, imprudent practice, as to exalt to its proper motives of religion, benevolence, and obedience to your country's laws, that abhorrence which hath been entertained against an action that is an outrage to common sense, and common opinion; and which,

we are taught in scripture, never fails to draw down God's wrath on the people who permit it to be done with impunity among them. It is an offence, which, if not checked in its progress, may renew those judgments that for our sins were lately poured out on us; under which we now, and long must continue to smart; without provoking farther God's vengeance, or obliging him to send new or extraordinary punishments to chastise or reclaim us.* Could I keep you from the contagion of example, I should rejoice. Whoever has thus sinned against God, and his country, shall have my prayers, that he may be inspired with a right way of thinking. Of this be assured, that such an extraordinary mode of industry is not the path in which God's blessings are to be met with. And they who use it have reason to fear, lest a distressful turn in their affairs make this day of liberty and rest, which they want to cut off from society, the only day in which they dare to enjoy their freedom.†

* Since this period this colony has been greatly reduced by fire, floods, war, capture by the enemy, and such unfavourable seasons, as had hardly happened before in the memory of man.

† It is certain, that he who began this custom, within twelve months durst not on any other day shew his face for fear of his creditors.

But

But if God did not, as certainly he doth, mix therewith a secret canker, to eat up the substance of the offender, yet the unfeeling, hurrying mode of thus working slaves, would, by wasting their strength and health, be of itself sufficient punishment. And, supposing the observation of the sabbath to depend wholly for its sanction on revelation, and the breach of it to be followed by no natural loss, which is far from the truth; yet, if you be diligent and obedient to the law, for God's sake, he can, in his Providence, and will, in a thousand ways, make up any imaginary sacrifice of time and profit to a trust in his word, and will proceed in an inconceivable manner to bless and prosper you.

I shall conclude with an observation drawn from mechanics. Though a man of ordinary strength can raise, at a single effort, a much greater weight, yet the most advantageous exertion of it is within thirty pounds weight; and he, who works diligently eight hours a day, will do more work in a week, than he who drawls out in languid exertions fourteen hours.

C H A P III.

**The Advancement of Slaves must accompany
their religious Instruction.**

I SHALL consider the advantage of promoting slaves in social life, as proved beyond a possibility of contradiction; but, as my particular aim is to get religion extended to them, I must shew that there is a connection between social privileges and religious instruction; and that the making of a progress in either requires them to go hand in hand, and influence each other. That men were intended both for society and religion, and that these two meant to support each other, is a conclusion to be drawn from every circumstance that respects our powers and constitution. The helpless state of infancy, the variety and inequality of our faculties, all attach us to a particular community, fit us

us for our various stations in it, and give it an indissoluble claim to our service and assistance. And religion brings conscience in to the aid of social regulations, and fits the man for acting his part in his proper station.

Religion has a two-fold purpose: man's ultimate fate as an individual, and his conduct as a member of society. Man, in order to become a good member of society, must be inspired with religious principles; that he may not counteract the common views, out of secret fraud, malice, or selfishness, but be carried on to every generous exertion by which the public happiness can be effected. Religion, then, must enter into every plan that has the general good or profit in view. As far, therefore, as we respect the prosperity of our country, we must wish to extend the influence of religion to all those who are comprehended within her laws. But, as Christians, we have still a stronger principle of action to excite us to exert ourselves in enlarging the empire of religion by every benevolent method within our power. Religion determines the future lot of the individual, and the grand principle of benevolence that runs through it, makes his happiness depend on his doing all

the good in his power here to his brethren around him. But the instruction of our negroe slaves is an act of goodness of the highest and most extensive nature: and the circumstances of our having originally enslaved them, of their living intirely for, and depending on us, and too frequently being oppressed and cruelly treated by individuals among us, gives them the strongest claim for receiving it at our hands. The privileges of Christianity are of a diffusive nature, and have this condition among others annexed, that we shall communicate them; freely we have received, freely we must give. And, in a case where none within our reach are to be excepted from sharing in the benefit, how highly incumbent is it on us to exalt to reason and religion those whom our avarice has depressed, even to brutality.

But, because, in the demand of duty we are often desirous of compounding matters, and in the present case, probably, may imagine that the highest purposes of religion may be gained without such an alteration in the condition of slaves, as while it rests on speculative arguments, may be thought somewhat dangerous; it will be necessary to shew, that, as the oppressed situation of negroe slaves prevents

prevents the community from reaping many important advantages from them, so it incapacitates them from making, in any considerable degree, a progress in religious knowledge. To make a man capable of religion, we must endow him with the rights and privileges of a man; we must teach him to feel his weight in society, and set a value on himself, as a member of the community, before we can attempt to persuade him to lay in his claim to heaven. To shew the reader, therefore, the necessity of advancing the slave, in the scale of social life, before we offer him a participation of our religion, I shall relate the little efficacy of such attempts as have been made to communicate religious knowledge to him in his hitherto debased state. And if such a communication be, as I have affirmed, not only a valuable but an indispensable object to society, I shall, in doing this, establish the necessity of improving his condition in social life.

S E C T. I.

Examples of the Difficulty found in instructing Slaves in their present State.

I am sorry to be obliged to remark how little, till within these very few years, has been

been attempted or proposed on this head. For though the race of authors and projectors equal the leaves of the trees as much in their numbers, as they resemble them in the shortness of their existence; yet, unless we take into account a few unconnected attempts, a few general strictures, and some unmeaning declamations, our slaves had hardly found a protector worthy of the appellation, till the publication of the late History of Jamaica; and the vindication they have found in it, as we shall have occasion to remark, is on such humiliating terms, as will, I fear, do them little good. Still the nature and issue of these attempts to instruct and serve them in their present oppressed state, will be sufficient to mark that improbability of success which we have affirmed.

Robertson, a minister in Nevis, about fifty years ago, wrote professedly on the conversion of slaves in our colonies, and seems to have been willing to have laboured honestly in it himself. But it is to be remarked of him, that he takes no notice of the entire want of law to secure to them proper treatment, nor so much as hints that this want is of any disadvantage to them. And, in respect of their conversion, he plainly shews that nothing

thing considerable can be done in it, unless government interpose in earnest to carry it on. But before government can meddle with slaves, it must take them first within the bosom of society, advance their condition, protect in them the claims of human nature, and make them objects of police.

He proposes that government should keep up a number of missionaries among the colonies, by rotation, whose whole employment should be to instruct the slaves, as fast as they acquired the language, or grew up to be capable of instruction. Their only reward, he thinks, should be a present maintenance, and a promise of being provided for at home, when the time of their mission was expired. In this plan, the reader will immediately observe, that the missionary will require some time to gain a facility in teaching, and that, if he returns home after a few years, he must resign to others his station, when he is become fit to hold it. The time of his employment will, therefore, require to be regulated in a particular manner to obviate this inconveniency.

He earnestly endeavours to exculpate the planters for having done so little in this affair, from their hurry of business, their own ignorance,

norance, their inability in point of fortune. He farther attempts to prove, that negroes, in general, are ill adapted for instruction, by reason of their sulkiness, stupidity, prejudices; in many, an incapacity of making any tolerable progress in the language; and, lastly, the universal carelessness that prevails among them about every thing that does not strike their senses.

In short, from his observations, a man would be apt to conclude, that he was of opinion that the manufacture of sugar, and the practice of religion, were things incompatible; and that before we began to deliberate about the conversion of slaves, the previous question had need to be discussed, whether we should maintain this manufacture, or apply ourselves to promote the growth of Christianity. But whatever may be the intrinsic merit of his plan, it has been too long before the public unnoticed, for us to expect much from it at this day.

A planter of ——, a man of education, and of a religious turn of mind, about twenty-four years ago attempted the conversion of his own slaves. He himself became their catechist and preacher. He increased their

their allowance of food, clothed them decently, treated them with humanity, tried to reason rather than whip them out of their faults, and granted them many indulgencies in the hours and degrees of their labour. He pursued his plan during a good many years, and, as was said, at first with some degree of success: but some time before his death, according to the author's information, he gave up the design, in despair of effecting any thing considerable by it. The causes of his ill success, that have been assigned, were a relaxation of discipline respecting their obedience and labour, for which they were not ripe; and his insisting on too accurate an observation of the sabbath, in the manner of the Jews, while they had no mental employment to substitute on it for their usual private labour, and social amusements. In short, the indulgencies that should have been the *reward* of improvement and good behaviour, were made to *precede* them; and there was nothing left to allure them, or encourage them in the work. But, since his death, several of his people have joined themselves to the Moravians, who have a mission in the colony.

A con-

A considerable number of years ago, the absent owner of a plantation sent out positive standing instructions to his manager, to have his slaves carefully instructed in the Christian religion, and baptized. He accompanied this order with directions to treat them in every respect with considerate humanity, and to do for them whatever was possible to make their state easy, and their lives happy. The minister of the parish accordingly was applied to, and a recompence for his trouble was agreed on. Here then was a prospect of a fair trial of what could possibly be effected among slaves in their present state; but the manager's injudicious choice of an instructor blasted every reasonable expectation. The minister was not even ostensibly decent, and never affected to be guided by principles of duty that he did not feel. He saw nothing in the proposal but an increase of income to himself, and was determined to intitle himself to it in the easiest manner possible. The following was his method:

He came to the plantation on a Sunday afternoon, and desired the manager to collect eight or ten slaves to be baptized. They were

were brought before him. He began to repeat the office of baptism. When he had read as far as that part of the service where he was to sprinkle them with water, if their former name pleased him he baptized them by it; but if he thought it not fit to call a Christian by, as was his opinion of Quamina, Bungee, and the like, he gave them the first Christian name which occurred to his memory. This name the bearer, perhaps, could not repeat, and scarcely ever remembered afterwards; so that he continued to be distinguished among his fellows by his old heathen name.

The minister, being once asked, what end he proposed in performing the ceremony in this superficial manner? frankly replied, "He was paid for doing it; it did the creatures no harm; and when they died, he should be paid for burying them." Accordingly the manager compounded the matter with him, and gave him yearly a cask of rum worth about £8 sterling, in lieu of surplice fees due for burying them. He had also a salary of £20 for visiting and praying with the sick, which, without being earned, he punctually received. For the baptisms, he was paid a certain sum.

Some

Some of the baptized would mutter, and say, they desired not the parson to throw water in their face; which is all that they knew of the matter, and therefore were loth to suffer themselves to be so dealt with. In short, if merely the making of them parties to a rite that they understand not, and in which they take no active or rational share, doth initiate them into Christ's church, then are they right good Christians. But if some share of knowledge, if some degree of assent be necessary to give the minister's conning over the office of baptism before them, some religious effect among them, these slaves can pretend to little Christianity. For here the plea of infant-baptism cannot be admitted, because neither non-age nor after-instruction can be pretended. In this manner was unsuspecting piety imposed on, and such formerly were the ministers recommended for the colonies.

S E C T. II.

The Obstacles that the Moravian Missions
have to struggle with.

The Moravians shew a remarkable and laudable degree of assiduity in making converts; and, taking their difficulties into account, they have had, on the whole, no inconsiderable ~~success~~. Their disciples in Antigua are about two thousand in number; the fruits of twenty years labour. Several planters encourage their endeavours among their people. But some years ago they received a rude shock from an attempt of a particular master to intrude on them Mr. Lindsay's tenets, which required their own firmness, and the affection of their converts to defeat. There are usually three missionaries. They have introduced decency and sobriety among their people, and no mean degree of religious knowledge. They have infant missions in Barbadoes, St. Christopher's, and Jamaica.†

† Every thing here said concerning the success of the Moravians, and the good effects of it upon the slaves in Antigua, has been lately confirmed to me by a gentleman who has spent many years in that island. But he adds, that the number of negroe converts, instead of 2000, is upwards of 6000.

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They have made the greatest progress in the Danish colonies. In St. Croix they have fixed a bishop, with several ministers and catechists under him. They have chapels in the different quarters of the island. Many gentlemen have private chapels for their use, and encourage them in their labours. Government countenances them; but the Danish clergymen in the island do not favour or assist them.

Every evening, except on Saturday, they have distinct meetings, by turns, for their baptized and catechumens. Their hour of general worship is on Sunday evening; the slaves being obliged to labour on that day for their subsistence. The converts are taught to use private devotions. When they go to, and leave off work, they sing in concert a few hymns drawn up in the common language. Singing makes a considerable part of their common worship.

The most sensible, of both sexes, are raised to the dignity of elders or helpers, to superintend each the behaviour of their sex, and to forward the work of instruction. When a brother commits a fault, he is mildly reproved in private, or if it be of a public nature, before the congregation: if he obstinately

stinately persists in the fault, he is, for a time, deprived of the eucharist, or separated from the congregation. This discipline seldom fails to produce **repentance**, on which he is readily re-admitted to the privileges of the society.

In bringing them on in religious knowledge, they begin by drawing their attention particularly to the sufferings and crucifixion of our Saviour. When this is found to have made an impression on their minds, and filled their hearts with grateful sentiments, they then make them connect it with **repentance** and a good life. Submission to their masters, and full obedience to their commands, even to working in the plantation, when so ordered, on Sundays, are strongly enforced; or rather, they impress on them the necessity of submitting to those irregularities which, in their state of subjection, they cannot avoid, that their masters may have no complaint against them, while labouring to gain the great point of general improvement. Their greatest trouble arises from the libidinous behaviour of overseers among the female disciples, which, however, some masters check as much as lies in their power.

The great secret of the missionary's management, besides soliciting the grateful attention of their hearers to our Saviour's sufferings, is to contract an intimacy with them, to enter into their little interests, to hear patiently their doubts and complaints, to condescend to their weakness and ignorance, to lead them on slowly and gently, to exhort them affectionately, to avoid carefully magisterial threatenings and commands.

The consequences of this method are observed to be a considerable degree of religious knowledge, an orderly behaviour, a neatness in their persons and clothing, a sobriety in their carriage, a sensibility in their manner, a diligence and faithfulness in their stations, industry and method in their own little matters, an humility and piety in their conversation, an universal unimpeached honesty in their conduct.

The brethren in Europe are at the expence of the missionary's journeys, and contribute to their maintenance. They have a small plantation in one of the Danish islands, from which they draw part of their support. Some of the miffionaries, at their leisure hours, apply to mechanic employments.

The

The rest of their simple maintenance arises from trifling voluntary collections among their disciples. Some of them are men of learning, others simple well-meaning men. Their bishop is a man of plain good sense and discretion.

This account of the Moravians appears, at first sight, to contradict my position, that the present debased state of slaves favours not religious improvement. The circumstances in their favour are, that they are seen by their scholars only as instructors or comforters; that they try to lose sight of slavery and its consequences, and shew their converts to themselves only in the light of a religious society; that, as far as the simplicity of their rites will permit, they draw imagination to their assistance, and paint religion almost in sensible colours.

But it may be observed, that the authority of the master which they must inforce, and the law of God, which they profess to teach, must often draw the hesitating slave different ways, and fill his mind with doubt, which of the two is to be obeyed. God sets apart the sabbath to recruit the body for labour, and improve the mind for futurity; the master, having

seized for himself the work for the week, obliges the slave to toil on that day for his own maintenance; nay, not unfrequently for his (the master's) avarice. Doubtless, however it may fare with the profane master, the fate of the slave himself is in the best hands; but he can acquire only an inferior kind of religion, and he must hold even that at the caprice of one who, in himself, perhaps has no religion. A mitigation therefore of their slavery, and a communication of some social privileges, are still a necessary foundation for any eminent degree of religious improvement,

S E C T. III.

Inefficacy of the Author's private Attempts to instruct Slaves.

Though some individuals may treat their slaves with humanity and discretion, yet we can give very few instances of any attention shewn to their *moral improvement*, or of any pains taken to enable them to become partakers of the gospel promises. Religion is not deemed necessary to qualify a slave to answer any purpose of servitude; and while we wish them to be diligent and faithful, we never think

think of placing a monitor within their breasts, nor of directing them to look up to God, as the observer or rewarder of integrity. Indeed, in the relation of master and slave, there is so little of what is reciprocal in the duty on one side and advantage on the other, that it is hardly possible to infuse any other principle than fear into the mind of a slave, or to make him consider himself in any other light than that of an unwilling instrument of his master's tyranny and grandeur: a condition that leaves him at liberty to seize every opportunity of making his service of as little use as he can to his master, and of making up for the pinching ill treatment that he receives from him, by pilfering and purloining whatever lies open to him.

When the author first settled in the West-Indies, he freely and openly blamed the carelessness of the inhabitants in a matter of this importance, and he resolved within himself to shew how much might be done by one who was in earnest. His slaves were well clothed and plentifully fed; their employment, which was only the common work of a private family, was barely sufficient for the

exercise necessary to preserve their health. There was more than a sufficient number of them. In short, they were plump, healthy, and in spirits. In the evening they were called in, and made to repeat the creed, the Lord's prayer, and a few other prayers that were reckoned best adapted to them. Their duty was explained to them in terms let down, as much as possible, to their apprehension. Their fears, their hopes, their gratitude, were all made to interest themselves in the subject. They were not punished for one fault in ten that they committed, and never with severity. They were carefully attended when sick. Nothing was at any time required of them but what was necessary, and much within their ability. But the treatment may be collected from this circumstance; that in eighteen years, though they had been gradually increasing by births and purchase from ten to twenty in number, not one had died in his family, except infants during the period of nursing. In other respects he cannot boast greatly of his success.

The first slave he possessed was a French negroe boy, who could tell his beads, and repeat his Pater-noster. He was placed out in

in town with a barber: there he formed such acquaintances, and acquired such habits of idleness, as made him a most irreclaimable run-a-way; and forced his master to dispose of him at a loss of twenty-four pounds sterling. He hired a sensible, industrious, elderly negroe, who seemed well pleased with his situation, till he found that he was obliged to attend in the evening at prayers. He plainly said, he did not love such things, and that he, a negroe, had nothing to do with the prayers of white people; and, in a short time, he left his place without assigning any other reason.

He has been obliged to send three negroes off the island for theft and running away, that he might not be under the necessity of punishing with severity. One of them, a sensible accomplished negress, was returned on his hands from the Danish island of St. Croix, for being such a thief, that no body would venture to take her into their family. Her own account was different. She had been returned by him, to whom she had been sent down, because his favourite Sultana had become jealous of her attractions. To the accusations of theft, she replied, that

that whatever she might formerly have done in her master's family, she knew better than to steal in an island, where, for taking the least trifle, she might, without noise, have been taken up, and executed immediately. She concluded, that her being sent back alive was a demonstration of her not having been guilty of theft during her exile. He was obliged to affect a satisfaction in her defence. And, though by no means faultless, yet, either from partial reformation, (for she was very capable of reasoning) or an unwillingness to make another trip from her native country, she continued to behave more carefully and attentively in the family; and at last became so industrious as to be able to buy out her own, and a daughter's freedom, that she had by a free-man. But he possessed not a single slave on whom he could place dependence. And, had it not been for a white woman, whose employment was to watch them, and whose care he used, as others do correction, to keep them from dishonesty, he would have been at a loss how to have carried on house-keeping, without a degree of severity abhorrent to his temper. Now, while they continued abandoned, irreclaimable,

claimable, and insensible of good treatment, they could be very little disposed to become Christians.

From this unfavourable view of his slaves, it must not be concluded, that all are absolutely worthless. You often meet with a slave attached to his master's interest, and in most respects trust-worthy. The author knows some that would not lose, on comparison, with the most circumspect and faithful servants in Britain. Slaves, indeed, are frequently attached to the persons of their masters, and will risk their lives readily for them, who yet make very free with their property. To speak generally, those masters are best served, who feed and clothe their slaves well, who are themselves methodical in their business, and never take notice of a fault in them unless they mean to correct them smartly for it. *They* are ill served, who are careless in their manner, indifferent how they are treated, averse to or irregular in their method of chastisement. And can any behaviour different from this be expected in creatures, whose only motive of action is present feeling, who have no reputation to support, no lasting interest to care for?

The

The author is sensible that his want of success was, in a certain degree, owing to a want of strictness in the method of treating his slaves, adapted to their present debased state. And this arose equally from his want of resolution to persevere in the disagreeable work, and from the situation of his family, a private one, not methodically and constantly employed in particular business. This circumstance rendered it incapable of being regulated with the accuracy of a plantation, where every hour has its employment, and every piece of work its overseer. Nor are any families among us so well regulated as those connected with plantations, where method in correction and work makes some amends for the want of principle in our manner of managing slaves. This, at first view, may appear harsh to the humane and pious; but it is not, therefore, the less a true picture of human nature; nor, to those who are acquainted with the necessity and effects of discipline in our army and navy, will it reflect any particular disgrace on the natural bias or capacity of Africans. Human nature, where-ever found in the same debased state, would shew itself in the same worthless manner.

manner. Nor is it an argument for straitening, but for relaxing, and at last entirely breaking, the chain of slavery.

Master and slave are in every respect opposite terms ; the persons to whom they are applied, are natural enemies to each other. Slavery, in the manner and degree that it exists in our colonies, could never have been intended for the social state ; for it supposes tyranny on one side, treachery and cunning on the other. Nor is it necessary to discuss which gives first occasion to the other. But as slavery has over-run so large a portion of society, the best thing now to be done, is to press its necessary strictness of discipline into the service of freedom. In conformity to this reasoning, I affirm, that, If ever the reformation, of which we intend to treat, takes place, it must begin in *a plantation*, where forms, that are the first traces, the outlines of rationality can be accurately ascertained, and constantly enforced, by persevering method and discipline. The mild and argumentative Solon could regulate the sprightly, sensible Athenians ; but the rough, unfeeling Russians required a Draco, in their Peter the Great, to wrest their brutality from them.

them. In our case, the block must, in some measure, be chipt in the rude manner of this last, before the light touches of the polisher can take effect.*

The author cannot, indeed, satisfy himself with what he has done, and continues to do, in spite of disappointment. The thing, when considered by itself, appears so plausible, and mild treatment makes, in his imagination, so amiable a part of it, that he is ready to hope, he has only missed the right road, and may be more successful, if he could strike out a new plan. Again, when it is considered, how much the negroes are immersed in sense, how their intellectual powers are wholly employed in the

* In this, and every other place, where a stress is laid on forms and discipline, the reader is desired to distinguish between strictness and cruelty. What is here suggested, is pointed at the master, more than the slave, and intends nothing violent or abrupt. If the master be exact, and careful in his own duty, he will have little reason to complain of the slave. Exactness of method prevents faults, and cuts off the necessity of punishment. It is the ignorant, the immethodical, the negligent, the gadding manager, or overseer, who must make up for all his own defects by stripes, and cruel usage to those who are under him. In Chap. I. Sect 7, we gave an instance of great strictness of discipline, without the usual proportion of punishment. Four times out of five the slave is punished for the overseer's fault.

service of the body, and that, respecting them, we have access to the first only by methods that make impression on the other; when he revolves the difficulty of managing, by argument alone, a few slaves living and having their connections among hundreds of their equals, who are restrained only by the whip, every hope of governing them, without certain degree of discipline, subsides; he is reduced to barely wishing, and praying, that things were otherwise than he has found them, after his best endeavours.

The example and conversation of our equals, will ever have greater influence on our behaviour, than the precepts or example of those who are supposed to be under other laws, and to have their lives regulated by rules different from those that we think are appointed for us. And it may be presumed, that the easy treatment which made part of the author's scheme, because most agreeable to his disposition, produced in minds not capable of distinguishing lenity from want of power, that carelessness to please, and proneness to ill behaviour, which marked his small number of slaves.

This

This was the case of the author's slaves, and the reasoning about them, as matters stood in the year 1771. Since the dreadful hurricane of 1772, which swept away all their little stock, there has been some change for the better in their general conduct. They have taken a turn to industry in their own little concerns, which has given them a relish for property (a turn that should always be encouraged) and this has had an effect on their behaviour. In consequence of this, the greatest part of them have been admitted to baptism, and were not the master too frequently obliged to interpose in matters of domestic concern, to check that spirit of carelessness and opposition, which naturally rises against the views of authority, the catechist and teacher might have appeared to have made some considerable progress among them. Though the relaxed discipline of the family made them still rather careless of pleasing, yet they kept more at home, and behaved more honestly; and while some seemed attached through principle, all had become more decent and orderly than in the former period.

But

But though they were slaves only in name, except in the not being at liberty to change the place of their abode at pleasure, and though become more manageable than before, yet the reluctance that run through and affected the service of the best, with only one exception; the bias they had to the manners and company of the slaves around them; the necessity of following them up in every step of duty imposed on them, and of keeping the fear of punishment suspended over them; in short, the apparent uneasiness on one side, and the indispensable mistrust on the other, plainly proved that they had no solid enjoyment of themselves. And indeed it was the strong feeling he had of these difficulties in the management of his slaves, which principally contributed to make the situation of their master most irksome to him, and to render a state of affluence and ease, (in a settlement otherwise as agreeable as imagination can well paint) so disgusting, as induced him with eagerness to embrace the first opportunity that a generous friendship offered, of a retreat in a country, in which, though less favourable

M to

to his health, and the views of his family, he could indulge the feelings of benevolence without regret.

S E C T. IV.

Inefficacy of the Author's *Public* Attempts
to instruct Slaves.

On his first settlement as a minister in the West-Indies, he made also some *public* attempts to instruct slaves. He began to draw up some easy, plain discourses for their instruction. He invited them to attend on Sundays, at particular hours. He appointed hours at home, to instruct such sensible slaves as would of themselves attend. He repeatedly exhorted their masters to encourage such in their attendance. He recommended the French custom, of beginning and ending work by prayer. But inconceivable is the listlessness with which he was heard, and bitter was the censure heaped on him in return. It was quickly suggested, and generally believed, that he wanted to interrupt the work of slaves, to give them time, forsooth, to say their prayers; that he

he aimed at the making of them Christians, to render them incapable of being good slaves. In one word, he stood, in opinion, a rebel convict against the interest and majesty of plantership. And as the Jews say, that in every punishment, with which they have been proved, since the bondage of Egypt, there has been an ounce of the golden calf of Horeb; so may he say, that in every instance of prejudice (and they have not been a few) with which, till within a year or two of his departure from the country, he has been exercised, there has been an ounce of his fruitless attempts to improve the minds of slaves.

No master would use any influence with his slaves, to make them attend at the appointed hours. Even some, who approved of the plan, or at least durst not, for shame, object to it, and who would have been offended with the man that should have insinuated their disregard to religion, did not think themselves obliged to co-operate, or encourage their slaves to attend on instruction. Nor did this backwardness proceed from a dread of the ill consequences of

improvement, but from an indolence in such matters, that cannot be explained to one unacquainted with the country.

In the bidding prayer, he had inserted a petition for the conversion of slaves. It was deemed so disagreeable a memento, that several white people, on account of it, left off attending divine service. He was obliged to omit the prayer entirely, to try and bring them back. In short, neither were the slaves, at that time, desirous of being taught, nor were their masters inclined to encourage them. But as this refers to a period about eighteen years ago, which, in change of inhabitants, is there equal to a generation, there is ground to hope that the ancient prejudices against the conversion of the negroes may, since that æra, in some islands and in some plantations be a good deal abated.

S E C T. V.

The Manner suggested, in which private Attempts on large Plantations, to improve Slaves, may probably succeed.

Little, we see, can be said of the endeavours of individuals, within the author's knowledge, to improve their slaves. Some years ago he scarce knew a man on the spot, who had seriously attended to their instruction, or who believed that interest, duty, or reputation, obliged him to attempt it. Nay, though the more moderate and sensible people allow that the instruction of slaves, if their present condition permitted it, and it could be brought about, would be a good thing, yet it is not to be concealed, that some have strong objections against every measure that has their benefit in view, or that considers them in any other light than instruments of labour. An owner will, indeed, sometimes have a favourite slave baptized; but I am not sensible of any care having been taken, either before or after, with one in ten, who are indulged with the rite, to see that they be instructed.

I was once requested to baptize a negress, remarkable for her faithfulness and attachment to her owner's interest. On examination, I found her grossly ignorant, and unusually inattentive. In the easiest manner in my power I attempted to instruct her, and as she lived in the neighbourhood, bid her come frequently to me. I spoke also to her owners, mentioned her ignorance, and expressed my readiness to instruct her. She never attended, was carried into another parish, and there baptized, I had almost said, without ceremony. Baptism is supposed to free a slave from the power of the negroe conjurer, and its being permitted, is considered, in the master, as the conferring of a favour, that is complete, when the rite is performed. The lot of slaves, respecting religion, is most favourable, when they happen to be presented young to a growing up daughter of the family, or to be the property of industrious people, just above the lowest rank. In these cases, care is sometimes taken to fit them for baptism, and some turn out tolerably sober, and sensible; but their proportion to the whole can hardly be taken into account.

But

But if slaves in *their present state* be capable of any *considerable* improvement, it will probably be on large plantations, where they compose communities of themselves, and where the discipline necessary for humanizing them can be carried on with the greatest strictness and effect. In this point of view is the following plan proposed.

In the first place, a chaplain must be appointed; and a man of considerable affi-
duity would find full employment among the usual numbers, that extensive plan-
tations contain of such ignorant crea-
tures. If a sober, discreet man in orders could be found, who understood physic
enough to enable him to take charge of their sick, greater encouragement could be
given, and one office would promote the other. For both, a single man should be
allowed £250 sterling per annum, the use
of a horse and a boy, and board with the
manager. No man, acquainted with the
country, will consider this appointment as
excessive, for a man of a liberal education.

The chaplain should teach the slaves some short prayers, to be repeated by them in

private, when they rise in the morning, and when they go to sleep. He should accustom them to repeat some short instructive form respecting their social duties, when they begin and leave off their field work. The black overseers, as in the French colonies, may soon be taught to take the lead in their field devotions.

A chapel should be built for the performance of divine service on Sunday, for prayers on the days when their allowance of provisions is distributed, for celebrating the offices of matrimony and baptism, and any other occasion of meeting together. A burying ground should be set apart for the decent interment of the dead, and it should be allotted out according to their families. It would have an excellent effect on them, if only tractable, well-disposed persons were buried with their families, and every worthless fellow buried in a place apart.

The chapel should be built near the hospital, that all, who are under curé, may, if able, attend service. The chaplain should be instant in instructing those in the hospital, that his teaching may interfere the less with

with their ordinary work in health. And as a considerable proportion, on some account or other, will be received into the hospital within the year, something valuable may be effected by embracing that opportunity. By applying particularly to bring forward the more sensible and teachable slaves, he may enable them in time to assist him in the work, and by little rewards, which he may be allowed to bestow, he may secure their help; but especially, he may give the parents affection a turn to the instruction of their children. The great difficulty will be, to let down the language of religion to their present capacity: a convincing proof with me, that however slavery may be permitted, yet originally Providence never designed any rational, or accountable creature for such a depressed brutish state, as that of African slaves in the British colonies. But if a few were once well-grounded in religious knowledge, they could talk more familiarly and feelingly to their fellows, than the minister; and his chief business, except general instruction, would then be to superintend their conduct, and excite them

them to the work. The young children generally shew themselves four or five times a day in a gang, with small parcels of grass, picked for the cattle. They may be made to repeat some short general precept, on delivering in their bundles, the most forward boy taking the lead.

Sundays are usually spent by industrious slaves, in their own provision grounds. To give them time for improvement and devotion on that day, they must be allowed at least Saturday afternoon for their own work ; taking care to keep them honestly employed, that they may not go robbing, or stealing, or get into drunken brawls. Few, at first, could bear such indulgence, without strict looking after.

As the manager will object to a regulation that curtails the working hours of his people, to induce him to allow the slaves this time, he must be permitted to make up for the labour reduced in giving up Saturday afternoon to themselves, by adding gradually to the gang, on a large plantation, about thirty young negroes. If the owner should, from delicacy, object to the buying of slaves, perhaps the consideration of its producing

producing a benefit to the whole, may prevail on him. This would be an expence at first, but, by increasing the vigour and industry of the slaves, would in time improve his property greatly beyond their first cost. And as the slaves might be made to perform their own work, under the direction of the overseers, their patches of ground would be better cultivated, and give greater increase, than when each is left to work as he pleafeth. This is on the supposition, that such plantations are fully stocked for the present views of the proprietors.

The gang should be marshalled by families, each division being put under the care of the principal person in it, who should be answerable for their conduct. At stated times they should pass in review, be examined in respect of health, give an account of their clothes, and the several articles of their little property. Then should follow an inquiry into their religious progress, and a distribution of rewards among the most diligent, either in getting themselves, or their children and fellows forward. Much would depend on the temper and discretion of

of the minister; much on the hearty concurrence of the manager.

A large public thatched room should be built, in which to hold their feasts and merry-makings; and the man of the greatest influence and sobriety among them, should be chosen by themselves, and approved of by the manager, to be master of the revels, and keep them harmless, and within bounds. Some solemn act of prayer, or thanksgiving, should begin and end every assembly.

No offence, except insolence and disobedience, should be punished by the manager, till it has been submitted to the decision of a jury, chosen from among themselves. This would accustom them to mark the difference between right and wrong, and at least make considerate and prudent slaves shun faults, which they had condemned in their neighbour's practice. All punishments should be inflicted with solemnity, in presence of the gang, accompanied with some short explanation of the crime, and an exhortation from the chaplain, to abstain from it. Insolence and disobedience are left to be

be punished at the discretion of the manager, till the slaves become capable of moral government, because he would not be able to support his authority, if obliged to submit the discussion of faults committed against himself, to the decision of other persons.

It is difficult to determine what reformation this example, and the good effects produced by this extraordinary care, might produce in a neighbourhood. But judging from analogy, we must not expect the fruits to be of a very quick growth, or very spreading nature. Thus, for instance, we know that interest pleads equally with humanity, for the kind treatment of slaves. Every discreet man feelingly acknowledges it; yet how often, in practice, do these principles seem to be at variance, in spite of the most convincing example which their union, in men of prudence and sentiment, can produce? How frequently may interest, or rather her accursed phantom, selfishness, be seen dragging a human creature in a chain, naked, starved, and raw with stripes, and demanding, with threats, that tale of labour, which cruelty has rendered the wretch incapable of performing?

Now

Now if example be so little of a diffusive nature, in a case such as this, in which all consider themselves as concerned, what may we expect to happen in religion, which is not deemed the concern of any particular person? The littleness in such matters is too universal; the desire of present gain too general, for any considerable proportion of the inhabitants to fall suddenly and eagerly into a scheme, that promises so little immediate profit, and seems to be so very foreign to their business, or duty, and so far above the capacity of the objects of this improvement.*

Yet

• Among the ancients, not only the fine arts, but sciences and philosophy, in particular instances, were cultivated by slaves. These were therefore immediate objects of religion and morality. But their situation differed greatly from that of our African slaves. These are savages ravished from their huts, and their country, to till, like brutes, a strange soil, in a strange climate, among people of a strange speech, without rights, without privileges, without enjoyments. The ancient slaves were often persons of condition, deprived of their freedom by the accidents of war; or such as had been liberally brought up in their master's family, and looked forward to freedom in his affection or gratitude. These once accustomed to reflect, pursued their studies, and searched in philosophy,
or

Yet on no account is there reason to despair. Good sense would induce the imitation of some ; religion, awakened by conscience, would exert her influence with others ; shame would oblige many, vanity more ; the natural progress of knowledge and reason in the human mind, though slow to answer the wishes of sentiment, would go on gradually to accomplish the important work. Even among the sensible slaves, emulation would have great effects. On the whole, the cause of humanity and religion would be served. But whatever might be the issue with others, were such slaves as these of whom we treat, advanced in social life gradually, as they shewed themselves capable of improvement, nothing could hinder their masters from reaping the happiest fruits from their humanity, piety, and good sense. They would be more healthy, more vigorous, more diligent, more honest ; they

or religion, for support under the miseries of their condition. In their case, no insolent pride in the master, of supposing himself of an higher race, blocked up the path to their advancement. It is pride with us forms an inseparable bar to every generous wish. Emulation is frozen ; expectation is dead ; the heavenly spark lies smothered in anguish and neglect, while all around is darkness and doubt.

would

would rise in the scale of being, possess more of the conveniencies of life, enjoy more happiness, and look forward with more confidence into futurity. I have mentioned the necessity of making social privileges, to accompany attempts at mental improvement, because I am persuaded, that little of consequence can be gained in the last, without bestowing something proportionably considerable on the other. But we shall leave the discussion of this point, to make a part of our particular plan of improvement.*

In

* That particular points may be gained among slaves, in their present state, though we have few examples of *general* improvement, may be concluded from the following narration.

On a plantation in a tobacco colony, lived some years ago a manager, a German, a reduced army officer. He formed the slaves into a regiment, dividing them into commands, and appointing officers over them. Their motions were performed, and their work was regulated by beat of drum. He planted armed centinels as in a garrison. Offences were tried as in a court martial, and none were punished till their equals had adjudged them to be guilty. A corporal had deserted and carried off his arms. The officer received intelligence of him, and as it was the first instance of desertion, and the offender had also killed one of his companions, it was necessary to make a striking example of it. The officer went at the head of an armed party, and surrounded the house where the corporal lay hid. It was night, and happened to be moon-light. The noise soon brought the deserter out, armed with his musket.

The

In general we affirm, that the master, or legislature, that aims at improvement, or desires to promote good order, must keep their people strictly to forms, and make the individuals judges of each other's behaviour. Breaches of morality may, under proper general sanctions, be left to the unbiassed opinions of the people. To direct industry, and indifferent habits, to a plan of general utility and obedience, is the object of police. To carry form and method into private life, is the true secret to impart firmness, both to law and empire.

It was not the *laws* of Lycurgus, which might not be in contemplation once in a man's life, but it was his *customs*, which

The officer, while advancing on him with his musket presented, bid him surrender, and on no account to present his piece, for on the smallest attempt he would shoot him: on the other hand, he assured him, on his honour, that he should have a fair trial. The corporal hoped to command more favourable terms in a posture of defence, but in attempting to level his piece, the officer shot him dead. He was tried in the provincial courts for killing the man, and was acquitted. But to shew his people, that he did not make one law for them, and another for himself, he had the cause formally discussed in his own plantation court, and was unanimously absolved. The effects that would naturally be produced by such a discipline, enforced by such an example, must, in things to which it is extended, be great and lasting.

met the citizen at every meal, that gave stability to Sparta. The decalogue, and the other principles of morality, fill a small space in the laws of Moses, and respect every other nation equally with the Jews; but ablutions, festivals, and sacrifices returned on his people, at every hour; and they were the institutes which have principally secured obedience to that constitution through a longer period of time, than any other system has been able to effect. Man is composed of matter and intellect; and he who would be master of the last, must not neglect the culture of the other. Our English laws pass over the private conduct of the citizen, to attend to nuisances, and impose taxes. Hence that absurdity of conduct, that inconsistency, that extravagance of behaviour, that misapplication of time, and wealth, which prevail among us, above all others, in private life. And yet how can the public carry on that joint purpose, which is the end of society, or how can it flourish as a community, when individuals are left, each man to follow his own caprice?* In short, we have too few circumstances

* To give one instance out of thousands of this neglect. The fate of the nation is supposed to be bound up with trade, yet

circumstances, that bring us together, or oblige us to consider ourselves as members of the same community. The social nature

yet is every man permitted to finish his own manufactures, in his own way, by which the national character and interest suffer daily among foreigners. This might be prevented, by permitting nothing to be exported, till it has endured the scrutiny of proper judges, and had its quality stampt on it by authority. This negligence, ere this, would have been as fatal in other branches, as it has already been in the Turkey trade, but for that emulation which naturally arises among competitors in the same branches.

This system, of directing by authority the private conduct of citizens, was carried a faulty length by the Jesuits in Paraguay. There the individual was considered as a mere instrument of public order, and public industry, without having any thing permitted to his own feelings, or inclination. And our slaves suffer in proportion, as they are under a master, who is more or less teasing and disturbing them in their own hours, and little concerns. But surely, it would not be difficult to oblige, by the regulations of police, a man to be happy in himself, and to add happiness to those around him, by fixing on the proper medium in managing him, between carelessness and instruction. The difference is exceeding great in our slaves, when employed for their masters and for themselves. In the first case, they drawl their task out, and weep under the burden, listless, and careless of success. See them on a Sunday morning, that only day of liberty, going to market with their own provisions, they walk strong, their faces cheerful, their bodies erect, their persons neat, and the whole man elevated and improved. Now the police that we recommend above, makes the man contribute to the general prosperity, while he imagines himself wholly taken up in pursuing his own interest, and exerting himself in his own business.

of our religion has indeed hitherto made up for many of the other defects, and prevented us from feeling their ill consequence. But in proportion as the notions of Epicurus become fashionable among us, this tie drops off also, and in all probability, unless we except our taxes, we shall soon have nothing in common as a people, but the sea that surrounds our isle. A desire of pointing out the way of giving success to the particular attempt here recommended, amidst the difficulties that surround it, has insensibly led to this digression.

C H A P. IV.

Natural Capacity of Slaves vindicated.

TO those who, with Moses, believe that all men had one common parent, though for wise ends different families have since had distinguishing marks fixed on them, the subject of this chapter would be an unnecessary digression. But we are so fond of an hypothesis, which indulges pride, and saves the trouble of inquiry, that the contrary, though leading to nothing generous, though narrow, selfish, and illiberal, has found powerful advocates, who draw after them crowds of admirers. Therefore, before we proceed to claim the rights of society, and of a common religion for Africans, we must first put them in possession of that humanity, which is pertinaciously disputed with them. With this view I

shall consider the objections made to their capacity, from hypothesis, from figure, from anatomy, from observation, and prove their natural powers, from reason and experience.

S E C T. I.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn from Philosophy, considered.

Hume, in his Essays, broacheth an opinion concerning negroes, which, if true, would render whatever could be advanced in their favour, of no account. But I trust his assertion, which certainly was made without any competent knowledge of the subject, will appear to have no foundation, either in reason or nature. In his Essay on National Characters, he says, “ That mankind is composed of three or four different races; and “ that there never was a polished society, “ but of the white race, to which all others “ are naturally inferior.” In particular, he gives it as his formed opinion, “ that there “ never arose a man of genius among negroes.”

Had

Had he lived in the days of Augustus, or even but a thousand years ago, his northern pride, perhaps, would have been less aspiring, and satisfied to have been admitted even on a footing of equality with the sable Africans. Virgil makes Dido insinuate to Æneas, the reason he had to expect humane treatment among her people, not because they were polished Phœnicians, but because they dwelt more immediately than other powers under the powerful influence of the sun. And in the time of Charlemagne, a foreign divine, writing to the Britons to encourage them, tells them, as a thing remarkable, that though their country lay far “north, yet it had produced several great “men.” Supposing these, and Hume’s observations, (if indeed these deserve the name) to have been drawn equally from fact, the conclusion is, that arts, sciences, and the polished life accompanying them, are slowly progressive through nations and climates, rather than that the natives of any particular country are born incapable of them in their turn, as if intended to act an inferior part in the moral world.

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Again,

Again, in his *Natural History of Religion*, he affirms, that if a traveller found a people void of religion, he would find them removed but few degrees from brutes.† He says, “ In the progress of human thought, “ the ignorant multitude must first entertain “ some grovelling familiar notion of superior “ powers, before they stretch their concep-“ tions to that perfect Being, who bestowed “ order on the frame of nature; ” ‡ “ to be-“ lieve,”

† Yet, why, if such be the man’s genuine sentiments, did he strive, in all his writings, to disgrace religion, and destroy every moral sentiment connected with it among his countrymen? I will not say what name such cool malevolence deserves, but, on the other hand, let not his friends pretend to exalt the author of such pestilential tenets above every human character.

‡ This is with a view to establish his favourite position, that polytheism was the first religion: because, he there says, “ Man could not possibly have degenerated from pure theism “ to polytheism; and yet, we know, that polytheism has “ prevailed.” But, forgetting this impossibility of degeneracy, in order to shew the little consequence of religion in general, and, as he humanely and respectfully observes, to set the religious sects a wrangling, while he and a few more choice spirits are making their escape into the calm regions of philosophy; he afterwards tells us, that man changes continually from polytheism to theism, and from theism to polytheism; and, in his opinion, it is a matter of no consequence. But consistency in the apostle of infidelity is as little necessary,

as

“ lieve,” saith he, “ invisible, intelligent power, is a stamp set by the divine Work-man on human nature. Nothing dignifies man more than to be selected from all the other parts of the creation to bear this image of the universal Creator.” Here, then, we have religion for a badge of excellence or reason, and the want of it a mark of inferiority or brutality. Speaking of the white or superior race, he goes on to affirm, that the bulk of mankind is incapable of being directed by the tenets of pure theism; that all popular religions, in the conception of their more vulgar votaries, are, therefore, a species of demonism; and that religious principles, as they have prevailed in the world, are only sick mens dreams.

Now, if we assume, as we justly may, that a perfection to be found very seldom in a superior race, cannot be expected in any instance in an inferior race; according to him, we shall in vain look among negroes for what is rare even in the white race.

as in the lives of those for whom the doctrine is calculated. There is, indeed, something so degrading in all Hume’s philosophy, as can recommend it only to a corrupt heart, and a vitiated understanding, which see nothing to wish for, or excite their emulation, out of the circle of animal indulgencies.

Here

Here and there we see a man six feet in stature; but were there such a nation as Fabulists describe pygmies to be, would a traveller expect to find a pigmy six feet tall? In supposing a distinction, we deny to the inferior every mark of excellency that distinguishes one individual of the superior race from his fellows. If, then, his supposition be just, it follows that negroes are not intended for religion. For, whatever be his private sentiments of revealed religion, he must allow it to be a species of general religion; and he admits the reception of religion to be a perfection in the superior race, an advancement of their nature, that few in comparison of the whole do really attain unto. He also allows that Christianity contains many of the sublime truths of theism, which, according to his opinion, no society, even of white men, ever yet lived up to. It would then be absurd to expect that negroes, an inferior race, should be capable of an excellence, even in that less degree, supposed to be contained in Christianity, to which a great proportion of the superior race, I will not say cannot, but do not, attain.

But

But there is something in a well-disposed mind, that makes the man revolt against this cruel opinion: and, I trust, nature flatly contradicts the assertion. As far as I can judge, there is no difference between the intellects of whites and blacks, but such as circumstances and education naturally produce.

It is true, there are marks, that appear now to be established, as if set by the hand of nature to distinguish them from the whites: their noses are flat; their chins prominent, their hair woolly, their skin black. They who, from Moses believe (and, since, on any scheme we must come to a particular time when the distinction took place, it is, to say no more, just as sensible as any other position) that the Deity parcelled out the earth into families and languages, may conclude, that these distinctions gradually took place at the period in which the sons of men were conducted by the invisible hand of Providence each to his allotted habitation. And, let it be remarked, that the characteristics of negroes shew themselves chiefly about the face, where nature has fixed both the national
attri-

attributes and the discriminating features of individuals, as if intended to distinguish them from other families, and bind them in the social tie with their brethren. But their tongues are as musical, † their hands as elegant and apt, their limbs as neatly turned, and their bodies as well formed for strength and activity as those of the white race.

After first writing the above, I was for a short time made happy, by finding that Lord Kaims, in his first volume of Sketches, had indulged the supposition, that at the dispersion, on the confusion of languages, when the earth was divided among Noah's posterity, national attributes first took place in the several families, in the several climates. But this satisfaction continued only till I

† It is surprizing, that during the continued rage for Italian fingers, it has never entered among the whims of the age, to try if music might not be imported from the Banks of the Niger. It is certain the natural taste of the Africans for music is considerable; and instruction and affiduity might change mungo's silly stage gibberish into the soft thrills and quavers of Italian eunuchs. By the way, how would it have hurt the pride of an overweening Hume among the Romans, to have been told, that the time would come when his sons should be emasculated to fit them for entertaining on a stage the barbarous Britons with effeminate music?

entered

entered on the perusal of the second volume: where it is affirmed, that the inhabitants of America have an origin distinct from the natives of the eastern hemisphere. We shall, therefore, consider these opinions together. ‡

That

‡ In a late well-known History of America there is room to imagine, that the author entertains the same opinion with Lord Kaims. He guards it, indeed, by saying, that we should be apt to believe the Americans had a different origin, if the scriptures did not assure us that mankind sprung from one stock. The doctor did not reflect that many of his readers had not the same opinion of the scriptures as he entertained; and that his conjecture, as an historian, would weigh more with them, than his faith as a Christian. He, probably, threw it out as a speculative opinion, without attending to the inhuman consequences deduced from it, and certainly he grounds it on very controvertible data. When he acknowledged the apparent difference, he should have been aware of the scepticism of the age, and guarded against the conclusions that would eagerly be drawn from it.

Indeed, the friends of virtue have seldom been sufficiently careful in this respect. Before any speculative opinion be given to the world, a man should turn it in his mind every possible way, to consider to what uses it may be wrested by infidelity, when brought out under the sanction of his name. A professed enemy of virtue must be placed in particular circumstances to be able to do much harm in the world by his writings; but every reverie of an eminent good man is eagerly seized on, if it can be turned to promote the purposes of profligacy. Would Locke, even in the eagerness of disputation, have hazarded that wild conjecture, that possibly matter might think, could he have foreseen that it would have established him

That without the information afforded by sacred history, and without an attention to that extensive plan of divine œconomy which it opens to us, we should, at first sight, imagine the several families inhabiting the earth to have had distinct progenitors, I readily acknowledge. But, since a history consistent in itself, uncontradicted by authority, agreeing in analogy with the past and present state of things, and supported by every possible collateral evidence of history, tradition, national manners, and customs, assures us that men had one common ancestor, that at a period, when men had become numerous, profligate, and daring, their Creator, to punish their rebellion, and, (conformably to that divine benevolence which constantly brings good out of evil) to make it instrumental in advancing society, and the more equal and speedy cultivation of the earth, divided them into families and languages, giving to each distinct features, and a separate speech: this, I say, being the case, we are not left at liberty to pursue every

him as a main pillar of materialism, and made him answerable for all its dreary consequences. In arguing, as in wrestling, we are not so careful to preserve ourselves from falling, as anxious to throw our adversary.

wild

wild conjecture. Both methods, at first, were equally easy to supreme power; both, at first, stood equally in need of an extraordinary volition or exertion of Omnipotence. But we can observe a peculiar propriety in choosing the latter. By giving man one simple origin, by bestowing on him a common nature, a foundation was laid for the ultimate re-union of mankind, as well now in improved social life as in futurity; a re-union intended to take place in time under the then-promised connecting head of the creation, and particularly rendered practicable in a unity of laws, government, and worship, by this universal equality established among the various families; which keeps the way open for the equal and gradual improvement of their common nature. This is the system taught by revelation: it is a plan that reason readily acknowledges, and benevolence cheerfully adopts; it gives a grand, a flattering, and the only consistent view of mankind, as having for its author the God of universal nature. He, who once has entertained it, must despise the conjectures of philosophy, and the paradoxes of infidelity. And surely it should gain for that

that revelation which discovers it a favourable, even an interested, hearing, equally from the politician and the philanthropist, as encouraging the noblest and warmest wishes that respect society or man.

All here is consistent and analogical. In certain attributes and qualities, in the mental powers, all mankind agree. The several families or supposed races have various marks, connecting them with each other, and distinguishing them from the rest. The nations into which each race is divided, with the common attributes of the race, have less apparent, yet still sufficient marks to distinguish them from others, and connect them together. Generally speaking, even inhabitants of provinces have a common run of manners, language, or features, perhaps of all taken together, to bind them in some degree of union, and also distinguish them. After these, domestic likenesses take place, that have still more intimate common marks, yet allow of a sufficient variety to know a man from his brother.

Now, in the eye of true philosophy, the distinguishing attributes of the individual, a hair more or less of this or that colour,

a par-

a particular feature predominant, have as certain a distinct cause in nature, as what makes the difference between the fairest European and most jetty African. If, therefore, we can resolve the discriminating attributes of individuals into the necessary final cause of social intercourse, why hesitate we in ascribing to the same cause the more obvious distinctions of the greater families? Or, why seek for causes less consistent, apparently less worthy of the Deity, to pamper vanity and pride, when this is full and sufficient to explain the fact?

For the period when this distinction took place, and the plan of reformation to which it looked, we are referred by Moses to the confusion of Babel, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance; " when he separated the sons of Adam; when "he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel;" a family, that, in the course of Providence, was separated, and, when the fulness of time came, was employed, to instruct the world in that common relation to their Creator and to each other, which had been entangled in error, disfigured by fable, and perverted

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by fiction: for this office the Jews were well calculated; their turn for commerce made them wander and mix with, while their customs kept them distinct from, other nations. They were actuated with zeal for the unity of the Deity, and shewed a wonderful patience under persecution.†

S E C T.

† It is remarkable of Philo, the Jew Platonist, that though he gives no hint of his knowledge of Christianity, which alone explains and vindicates the Jewish law, and points out its design; yet, with Christians and Platonists, he supposeth the world to be the immediate work, and under the particular government of the Demiurgos, or word, and he affirms the separation of the Jews to have had the gradual improvement of mankind in view.

In spite of the obligations that the world in general owes to the Jews, respecting theology and morality, yet so fashionable is it for every author, in imitation of Voltaire, to go out of his way to abuse them, that he who expresses a regard for them exposes himself to contempt. But those who deny them, the privileges of a particular dispensation, in so doing exalt them above all nations of antiquity. For they alone had penetration to find out, and piety to worship, the universal Creator. The Roman twelve tables were a collection from all the Greek institutes; how contemptible are they compared with the decalogue! That anciently the Jews were not the despised people which modern infidelity would fain represent them, appears clearly from the alliances formed by them, and the immunities and privileges granted them under the Persians, Grecians, and Romans. The sarcasm of Augustus on them, may be accounted for from their being the only province that refused

S E C T. II.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn
from Form, considered.

The marks that distinguish the African, and give room to the tyrannic European (for I believe the Asiatic master is content with the pre-eminence that power imparts) to claim the highest place, are, as I before observed,

refused to make him a God. The sneering of the Roman poets is, in the case of a conquered nation, but a poor proof of a matter of fact. But these cavillers have not reflected that the history of the Jews, from which their abuse is drawn, considers them wholly as objects of morality and religion, under the immediate government of the Lord Jehovah, not with other histories as a state rising and falling in the scale of opulence. Take the most virtuous people of this, or any ancient period, and measure their manners by the perfect law of God, and will they stand in a more amiable or praiseworthy light than these despised out-casts? Doth Jeremiah paint the depravity of his people in stronger lines than honest Latimer doth that of his age, though the period of reformation? Would Latimer soften his stile, were he to return among us? Farther, to be abused is a sign of opposition and emulation rather than of inferiority. Why, among the various nations that inhabit the British isles, is one alone abused by their wealthier neighbours, but because it treads most closely at their heels? Had not the Jews made a distinguished figure in the Roman Empire, the triumph that celebrated their conquest would have closed the account of them as a people.

flat noses, prominent chins, woolly hair, black skins; to which the curious anatomist adds skulls less capacious, calves of the legs less fleshy, and elevated more towards the hams. Now, allowing all these, we want a link to connect them with inferiority. Less capacious skulls, indeed, will at once be deemed conclusive against us; but has the rule been applied, and is it found agreeable to observation in common life?

We know that climate, diet, and the various modes of life have great power over the features, form, and stature of man. West Indian children, educated in England, improve not only in complexion, but in elegance of features: an alteration arising, perhaps, equally from change of climate, of diet, and of education. We see similarity of features run through particular families. Shall we, therefore, be able to tell which carries the ensigns of genius; which bears the impression of wisdom, the proper foundation of power. On this supposition, hereditary indefeasible right in Kings would not be a subject of ridicule, but of grave discussion. We need only to distinguish accurately the stamp of royalty to put ourselves under

under the best possible government. Were this allowed, we could no longer laugh at the Egyptians for pretending to be able to call out their God Apis from amidst herds of common oxen. We see sets of national features independent of colour. We see colour gradually verging from white to black, through every intermediate degree of tawny and copper. We see genius sporting in various forms, tall in Newton, bulky in Hume, slender in Voltaire, diminutive and deformed in Pope. Where shall we fix the claim of genius? how pursue it through all the diversity of human form? Or, were we to attempt it, and insolently place ourselves, or our tribe, in the highest rank, would not HISTORY dash the vain garland from our brow? Would it not tell us that arts, sciences, and the immediate capacity for them, are progressive in their nature and objects, visiting sometimes this region, sometimes another?

Again, of the same society, of the same family, some men are smooth, some hairy, some tall, some short, some fair, some brown. But as these peculiarities are indiscriminately distributed among individuals, otherwise

equal, no body thinks of applying a rule to measure the difference, or of ascribing to each its allotted share of mental powers. Yet the most minute difference, a shade more or less, of this or that colour, must have as distinct a cause to produce it, as what divides a man from a monkey. And Mr. Hume, because a tall bulky man, and also a subtile philosopher, might have denied a capacity for metaphysical subtilty to all who wanted these his great bodily attributes, as well as suppose capacity and vigour of mind incompatible with a flat nose, curling hair, and a black skin.

It is said of negroes, that their brain is blackish, and the glandula pinealis wholly black; a remark of which the Cartesian, with his audience-hall of perception, might make much. It has not come within my notice; nor on the principles of common sense can any thing be inferred from it, unless anatomy had also determined that the jaundice affects not these parts, as a proof that this blackness arises not from the colour of the skin. But it is observed that their blood is of a dark red. This may be accounted for from their poor salt diet, and their working naked.

naked in the sun; and this colour in the blood may contribute to these appearances in the brain, while running through the capillary vessels that are spread over every visible part of it.

The skin takes its colour from a gelatinous substance, placed between the scarf and the proper skin: this substance approaches to jet black in proportion as the place of their nativity lies near the equator. In bad health, it equally, with the northern white, in the same circumstances, changes into a sickly yellow. Is not colour a precarious foundation for genius, seeing, in one view, we may suppose it to reduce the parts of a sick white man, in another to increase those of a sick negroe, by bringing both nearer to a ratio of equality.

Perhaps an enquiry into the nature of freckles in fair complexioned people might throw some light on the blackness of the African. The seat of their blackness and of freckles is the same; and they appear to be allied in nature, being both, probably, a secretion, and coagulation from the capillary vessels, brought about in particular circumstances by the ministry of the weather and

sun: for negroe children are born white, and the weather and sun cause freckles. When, therefore, we can account for the pre-disposing cause of freckles in particular persons, we shall know something of black skins: for a freckle may be defined a partial black skin; a black skin an universal freckle. It may be an help in the inquiry to remark, that a disposition to be freckled and strong red curling hair generally go together: as in this light, a black colour may be deemed the effect of weather on a delicate skin; and freckles as a similar effect on skins of a coarser, though not the coarsest grain. It would be curious to observe, among one's acquaintances, if their parts were in the inverse proportion of the fineness of their skins; or if a much freckled skin, with its curling hair, as approaching to black, be a sign of the owner's stupidity or dulness.

In northern climates men have long hair, and sheep have wool; in southern climates sheep have hair, and Africans woolly heads. In time we may be able to account for both without bringing genius into question. The flat noses of negroes, in many cases, may be accounted for from the custom of being constantly

stantly tied on their mothers backs when infants, and nature has prepared them for this, by shortening the cartilage of the nose. Sometimes they are procured, as an agreeable feature, by violence. In general they are a national feature, like the high cheek bones of the Scotch. Calves, swelling little, and placed high, are frequent, but not universal, or even general, in the legs of negroes; nor seem they to prevail much more among them, especially among Creoles, than among the Creole whites, who are originally from Europe. Some negroes have legs, that in clumsiness and lowness of calves, may vie with an Irish porter. The same may be affirmed of the prominent chin: it is frequent, not general; a convex face is not a rare sight among them. If, therefore, an oblongated, or concave face be, as is supposed, connected with a small cerebellum, it is not their general attribute. On the other hand, I have amused myself with observing, that some of the most improved of my acquaintances may be remarkable for prominence of chin.

Whether these distinguishing marks of negroes were, as we have supposed, fixed by

by the Author of nature, as part of that plan of particular society, and future reunion, that began with the race of man, whether caused by climate, or given to enable them to bear the fervours of the torrid zone, or whether all these causes have co-operated, while we conclude not on our superiority over them, is matter of innocent disputation. Of the last-mentioned cause it is certain, that though they work naked in the hottest hours, their skin never blisters, while vagabond white sailors blister wherever the sun reaches them; and that they enjoy hot dry weather, while moisture and cold make them shiver, and crouch down helpless and spent. On the whole, our observations are not of that length of time, and accuracy of manner, on which to build the fond opinion of northern superiority; and reason and revelation forbid the haughty thought. Supposing the general superiority of Europe over the natives of the torrid zone, while we argue from these principles, how shall we account for the Mexicans being less black, and more civilized within the equatorial girdle, than the Californians, inhabiting the region of genius, and

and white skins? or, according to the author of the observation, "how can improved society change an apparent law of nature?" Shall we suppose the equatorial circle to have been originally allotted to the black race, and that they have been expelled from all parts of it, except Africa?

S E C T. III.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn from Anatomy, considered.

We have gone through the several particulars, in which negroes visibly differ from white men, and find, that should they even mark a different race, they can in no respect determine their inferiority. We come now to consider, what may be indicated from diminutive skulls.

A gentleman, justly celebrated for his accuracy in the course of his anatomical researches, has discovered a surprizing difference between European and African skulls. This suggested to him the idea of drawing out a series of heads in this gradation; European, African, monkey, dog. The difference between the two first, is

is indeed striking; the European, by the swelling out of the hinder part of the skull, supporting itself so as to shew the face almost perpendicular to the table on which it is placed, while the African, for want of such support, recedes from the perpendicular, and shews an obvious elongation of the lower jaw. The use that he has made of the discovery, has been the classing of the nations by their attributes, without taking genius into account. He rather throws it out, but only as a conjecture, that negroes might have been the originals of mankind, he having observed, that in all birds and beasts, the originals, whence the tame sorts are derived, are black, and that every variation from them approaches more or less to white.

Other men, less modest, have drawn from the observation, the conclusion of inferiority; it therefore will be necessary to pay a particular attention to it, or rather to their deduction from it. And we shall first observe, supposing this distinction real, that it must have some benevolent and general purpose; which purpose we should search for, and follow out; which purpose we know is not

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to feed pride, or indulge cruelty, as these notions at present do. Matter of fact, or the real agency of nature, wherever discovered, may be assumed for the foundation of our reasoning; nor should we vainly imagine that she stands in need of our feigned apology, or wants to lie concealed behind the flimsy texture of our conjectures. We may be unacquainted with her workings, or with the particular purpose that she means to carry on. But we need not therefore fear, lest what comes from her hands be found fraught with absurdity, or lead to principles destructive of humanity, or derogatory to wisdom and goodness. Let then the fact be, that negroes are an inferior race; it is a conclusion, that hitherto has lain hid and unobserved, and while it leads only to an abuse of power in the superior race, it is better concealed, than drawn out into notice. Perhaps Providence may keep it doubtful, till men be so far improved, as not to make an ill use of the discovery. I am sure, at present, the power, if it be a right, is delegated to many improper persons. In the mean time, while the superior race continues likely to abuse it, every step that leads to

to the establishment of a point, the good purpose of which lies hid, while the evil purpose is ready at hand, should undergo and stand the severest scrutiny before it receives our approbation.

1. In this case it must be established as a maxim, that except in cases of idiotism, or accidental ill conformation, the rational powers are in proportion directly as the quantity of brains. And hence it will follow, that with the foregoing exceptions, we may, among Europeans, bring genius to actual admeasurement, and determine its degrees by the size of the possessor's head, just as an exciseman gauges a beer barrel. How much of those wranglings, that render us contemptible in the eyes of all Europe, should we save in both houses, if our competitors for power, instead of wasting the nation's time in a war of words, should each submit his head to this simple trial of its capacity?

2. In the second place, this difference must be universal, without a single exception, unless as above. For, as we have clearly proved, there must always be a degree of excellence to distinguish the lowest of the superior order, from the highest of the inferior.

ferior. And this, it seems, in the case of the skull, is actually determined by the same gentleman against the supposition; for there is in his possession an European skull of the same proportion as his African. In confirmation, I may say, that I know many instances, where the African excels individual Europeans, in the exercise of the reasoning faculties.

3. That brains and reason are constantly in a direct ratio, will be disputed in determining between the dog and monkey. I have heard much of monkeys; I have had opportunities of observing them; but nothing has led me to conclude, that they are equal, far less superior, in reasoning and sagacity, to that humble friend of man, the faithful dog: certainly they are not so teachable, nor so capable of being attached by good offices, or gratitude. While on this head, we may observe, that naturalists suppose every various species of dog to come from the shepherd's cur; yet their shapes and qualities differ more sensibly, than does the African from the European.

4. Another fact to be established is, that the discriminating size of the African skull, and

and consequent inferiority of reasoning, continue in the fixed civilized generations, and that, after no given period, do they approach to European capacity. But allowing the difference to be at first real, I can, from observation, deny its continuance among Creole negroes.

Supposing the distinction to be found among the wilder tribes, we may well account for it in the following manner. Among savages, the powers of the mind are confined to few objects; and though their acuteness respecting them, in particular cases, may exceed what can be imagined in polished life, yet certain it is, that we have few well attested instances of the capacity of savages, in attaining the various accomplishments, and abstract notions, to be found in common among a civilized people. Their want of words in their native tongue, to express, or communicate their ideas, would be a sufficient bar. And this may be one great cause why, in North-America, the children of savages, after having been educated in the European manner, and taught to read and write, generally seize the first opportunity of returning to the rude customs of

of their fathers. Now we can perceive a gracious design in what Providence denies, as well as in what it bestows. A man capable of varied knowledge, and versatile exertion, in a situation where he had few or no objects to work on, would be unhappy in himself, and a curse to all around him.* His desire, and power of exertion, are therefore confined within his opportunities and means of employment; and we have only to try, and discover the manner, in which nature has contrived to fit him for his rank. In doing this, we will consider the difference between the skull and the reason of an African, and those of an European, as an established fact, from which we are to reason.

Suppose then an African, in his savage state, to have less brains, and in consequence less reason, yet still a sufficiency for his situation; the question then is, whether his head, his brains, and his reason, would not expand in the successive generations of civilized life. We know, that independent of the imme-

* What sad work would the authors of our present new systems in philosophy, religion, and government, make among the simple Chiquesaws or Algonquins.

diate organs of generation, the female, even in parts exactly similar to those in the male, is particularly adapted to the bearing, bringing, and suckling of children. Now the way of life, and the degree of exercise, that the female has used from her birth, may either check, or favour her construction as a mother. In the savage state, where hunting is the chief means of subsistence, food must be scanty, and only to be procured by patience and exertion. Savages therefore, both male and female, will be found lean, dry, muscular. And this condition will particularly affect the female, because in almost every savage tribe, she is considered as a slave, intended to labour for, and serve her husband. Will not these circumstances, her scanty diet, and violent exercise, affect the conformation of her body, and render the few children whom she brings forth, lean, slender, their heads smaller, more elongated, the brain of a drier, less elegant texture, just capable of that degree of intelligence which the savage state requires? And may we not ask, Is not this, in a certain degree, found to be the case of such women among us, as are habituated to hard labour? Children

ren of the lowest peasants, I believe, are as seldom found to take an high station in literature, as in elegance of form. The middle ranks of life, that supply conveniences to soften, not luxuries to drown nature, are most favourable to elegance of form and acuteness of understanding. Fishermen's wives, in the north of Scotland, labour more hardly than any other women in Britain; and their neighbours look down with contempt on the stupidity and ignorance found in the fishing villages. Hence may be accounted for the care taken by the ancient Bramins to regulate the diet, exercise, and passions of their pregnant women.

But suppose savages to be so far civilized, as to be fixed in their habitations, to be well clothed, and properly fed; suppose their women treated with the regard that women generally receive in polished life, eased of labour, employed only in regulating their family, or supported in idleness, or amusement. Would not their bodies expand, and the sexual qualities attain an higher perfection? Would not the embryo be better nourished, the tender texture of the brain be less injured, than when the pregnant wo-

man used scanty nourishment, and violent exercise? Would not the children be brought forth more plump? Would not the brain, favoured in its growth, force the skull to take its natural spherical form, and, according to our hypothesis, make the man more capable of improvement? And, this, as far as my opportunities of observation have reached, is the case of negroes who have been domestic slaves for three or four generations in our colonies, or have been made free three or four generations back.*

* The reasoning here used was submitted to the late celebrated Dr. Hunter, who was pleased to say, That, as far as anatomy was concerned, he thought it fair and conclusive. The same gentleman, in his course of lectures at the Royal Academy, when shewing the gradation of skulls, a discovery which he candidly gave to its right Author, humanely observed, that he drew no conclusion from the difference in them respecting African inferiority. Several persons, who had possessed the best opportunities of observing the capacity of Africans, had assured him, that there was no difference to be seen, but what could be traced to their depressed condition, and that there were instances, where African ability had shewn itself in spite of all the disadvantages under which it laboured. He understood, that the very doubt whether they might not be an inferior race, operated against the humane treatment of them; and God forbid, said he, that any vague conjecture of mine should be used to confirm the prejudice.—Such was the modesty of true genius

That

That there is any essential difference between the European and African mental powers, as far as my experience has gone, I positively deny. That there may be an accidental or circumstantial difference, I can easily suppose, and, should it be true, think I can see the reason of it, as above explained. And this opinion is farther strengthened, by remarking, that, as far as the history of polished society goes back, both Asiatic and European women have, from the first, been generally indulged, and accustomed to a domestic sedentary life, favourable to the bearing and suckling of such children as might be capable of advancement in the departments of reason, and in all that varied intelligence which polished life calls forth and stands in need of. We have indeed one exception, and it is favourable to our conclusion. The Spartan women were accustomed to a poor diet, and violent exercise, even to contending and wrestling with men. And it is well known, that among the polished Greeks, the Spartans were a nation of savages: their language, like that of other savages, broken, yet expressive; their

knowledge confined to war, but to the part of a mere soldier; for they were once so absolutely without a citizen fit to command their army, that they were obliged to employ a lame Athenian fidler as a general. Nay, so late as the Persian war, they were forced to send to the Athenians to get instructed how to attack a barracado, made of baggage implements. Nor among the numerous artists and philosophers that Greece produced, are any celebrated as Spartans by birth. For, if Lycurgus is to be reckoned an exception, we may say, that he formed the Spartan discipline, but was not himself formed by it. If one or two individuals of that state are to be ranked among the philosophers, for uttering a few abrupt sentences, there is not a chief among the American savages but has an equal, perhaps a superior, title to the station.

S E C T.

S E C T. IV.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn from
Observation, considered.

The ingenious author of a late History of Jamaica, has treated this subject at considerable length, and appears to have formed, from his own observation, the same opinion as Hume's, of negroes being a distinct race. To suppose them only a distinct race, will not immediately affect our arguments for their humane treatment and mental improvement; but the consequences usually drawn from it shock humanity, and check every hope of their advancement: for, if allowed to be a *distinct* race, European pride immediately concludes them an *inferior* race, and then it follows, of course, that nature formed them to be slaves to their superiors. And the master having established these premises generally, and complimented himself with a place among the superior beings, fairly concludes himself loosed from all obligations, but those of interest, in his conduct towards them. A horse and a bull, are animals

each of a different species; but the superiority has not been established between them, nor the inferior brought into bondage by the lordly master. For argument's sake, suppose negroes of a different and even of an inferior race, still, we know they are capable of forming, and actually have formed, free independent societies; and, though they have not yet attained the refinements and luxuries of Europe, yet have they shewn no small ingenuity in compacting themselves together, and made no mean progress in many of the arts of life. And to help to compose, and be a member of a free state, is more honourable, and gives greater scope to the mental powers, than to be the most polished slave in America or Europe. Still, being such, are they to be dragged away from a country adapted to their constitutions, from plenty of nutritious food, to which they have been accustomed from infancy,* to work as slaves, hungry, naked, torn with stripes, in a distant, unfavourable clime, for the avarice and lusts of, perhaps,

* Left this should seem to contradict the reasoning drawn from their original savage state, it is necessary to observe that the slaves, as brought from Africa, differ greatly, in respect of ability, according as the nation from which they have been kidnapped has advanced more or less in social life.

some

some of the most worthless persons of the pretendedly superior families, with whom they had neither acquaintance or connection? Suppose different races, and that they vary in point of excellence; yet, in what chapter of nature's law is it declared, that one quarter of the globe shall breed slaves for the rest? Where shall we find a charter conferring authority on the one, and ascertaining the submission of the other? Are no conditions annexed, no rights reserved, which, when violated, the subjected race can plead before their common Lord? Such a state cannot be imagined as existing under the government of God: it is blasphemy against his benevolence even to suppose it. The inanimate and brute creation was fitted for and submitted to man's dominion; but man himself was left independent of every personal claim in his fellows. And nothing but an implied voluntary surrender of his independency to society, for the benefits of law, can controul or lessen his claim. But North-American or West-Indian slavery implies no surrender, supposes no submission, but to necessity and force.

Had

Had nature intended negroes for slavery, she would have endowed them with many qualities which they now want. Their food would have needed no preparation, their bodies no covering; they would have been born without any sentiment for liberty; and, possessing a patience not to be provoked, would have been incapable of resentment or opposition; that high treason against the divine right of European dominion. A horse or a cow, when abused, beaten, or starved, will try to get out of the reach of the lash, and make no scruple of attempting the nearest inclosure to get at pasture. But we have not heard of their withdrawing themselves from the service of an hard master, nor of avenging with his blood the cruelty of his treatment.

To suppose different, especially superior and inferior races, supposes different rules of conduct, and a different line of duty necessary to be prescribed for them. But where do we find traces of this difference in the present case? Vice never appeared in Africa in a more barbarous and shocking garb, than she is seen every day in the most polished parts of Europe. Europe has not shewn greater

greater elevation of sentiment than has shone through the gloom of Africa. We can see cause why the nations, into which for the purposes of society mankind has been divided, should have characteristic marks of complexion and features, (and almost the whole of the present subject of discussion may be resolved into these) to tie, by the resemblance, fellow-citizens more closely and affectionately together. And, be it remarked, that these signs are mere arbitrary impressions, that neither give nor take away animal or rational powers; but, in their effect, are confined to the purpose for which they appear to have been impressed, the binding of tribes and families together. Farther, climate, mode of living, and accidental prevalence of particular customs, will account for many national characteristics.

But the soul is a simple substance, not to be distinguished by squat or tall, black, brown, or fair. Hence all the difference that can take place in it is a greater or less degree of energy, a more or less complete correspondence of action, with the circumstances in which the agent is placed. In short, we can have no idea of intellect, but

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as acting with infinite power and perfect propriety in the Deity, and with various degrees of limited power and propriety, in the several orders of intelligent created beings; so that there is nothing to distinguish these several created orders, but more or less power; and nothing to hinder us from supposing the possible gradual advancement of the lower into the higher ranks of created beings. But we cannot, in like manner, speak of the change of a bull into an horse, or of a swine into an elephant. The annihilation of the one is included in the transmutation into the other, because in it that is lost which constituted the specific difference.

We can plainly see the propriety of different pursuits, and different degrees of exertion of the reasoning energetic powers in the several individuals that compose a community, for carrying on the various purposes of society. But there is not, therefore, a necessity to have recourse to different species of souls, as if the peasant had one sort, the mechanic a second, the man of learning a third; yet whatever concludes for the propriety of races differing in point of excellence, will conclude

clude also for a difference in these. And we see, in contradiction to all such reveries, that communities flourish in proportion as the less of any other difference takes place, than that in which society naturally disposeth of its members for their mutual or joint benefit. The soul is versatile, and being simple in itself takes its manner and tincture from the objects around it; it universally appears to be fitted only for that character in which it is to act: but that this is not an indelible character appears plainly in every page of the history of mankind. Look into our books of travels, and, in persons no ways remarkable for genius or invention, admire the almost incredible efforts and productions of necessity. How often has the shepherd shone out as a statesman, and the peasant triumphed as a general? Can we suppose greater difference between the African and European, than, for example, between the keeper of sheep, and the Governor of men; between leading an herd of gregarious animals out to pasture, and directing the complicated genius and bent of that various creature man, either to counteract or attain the purposes of society: yet the only difference between them lies in the direction given to the mental faculties.

Thus

Thus far we have opposed opinion with argument, and, excepting a remark of which we shall take notice, we may leave all that the author above-mentioned has advanced of the inferiority of negroes, to be contrasted with the instances given by himself of their energy, abilities, and sentiment, and to be compared with the instances of stupidity to be found in the most polished nations. For, as we have proved, if we establish the notion of different races, we must still draw a line between the highest of the one, and the lowest of that next above it. Particularly, we may say of his example, Francis Williams the negroe poet and mathematician, that though his verses bear no great marks of genius, yet, there have been bred at the same university an hundred white masters of arts, and many doctors, who could not improve them; and, therefore, his particular success in the fields of science cannot operate against the natural abilities of those of his colour, till it be proved, that every white man bred there has outstripped him. But allowance is to be made for his being a solitary essay, and the possibility of a wrong choice having been made in him. Childish sprightliness, for which it

it seems he was singled out for the trial, is not always, nor indeed often, a faithful promiser of manly parts; too frequently it withers without fruit, like the early blossoms of the spring. Other gentlemen of Jamaica speak highly of his abilities, and of the favour they procured for him.

The remark in this author referred to, is that Mulattoes cannot propagate their kind with each other, or, at least, that their children are few and short-lived. Now it should be observed that Mulattoe girls, during the flower of their age, are universally sacrificed to the lust of white men; in some instances, to that of their own fathers. In our town, the sale of their first commerce with the other sex, at an unripe age, is an article of trade for their mothers and elder sisters; nay, it is not an uncommon thing for their mistresses, chaste matrons, to hire them out, and take an account of their gains; or, if they be free, they hire their service and their persons, to some one of the numerous band of batchelors. In this commerce they often contract diseases, and generally continue in it till grown haggard and worn out. Thus few Mulattoes marry in their own rank, and fewer in a state of health favourable to
popula-

population. But where the above circumstances take not place, Mulattoe marriages are extremely prolific, in every instance within my knowledge; and I can recollect more than six such families where there is a numerous healthy offspring, and no doubt to be entertained of their legitimacy. As intellect is the peculiar attribute of man, and is a simple substance, it is incumbent on those who maintain a difference in races and natural abilities, to tell us how the superior intellects of a white person, and the inferior intellects of a negroe unite, and become a *tertium quid*, in their Mulattoe offspring. Is nature at the expence of forming separate and different conditioned intellects for all the variety of casts between complete white and black in our several colonies? *

S E C T.

* In the above discussion we have assumed the existence of intellect as confidently, as if modern philosophy had not asserted man to be organized matter. The assertion, though unaccompanied by conviction, is such a check to every aspiring thought, that hardly, since I heard of the discovery, have I been able to reconcile one to myself; nor can I endure an opinion which would rob me of a comfort that smoothed every ill of life, and encouraged me to look up to futurity for a recompence, which my heart told me was reserved for the humble and benevolent.

S E C T. V.

African Capacity vindicated from Experience.

Having shewn how little can be rationally concluded against the capacity of negroes, from

benevolent. It is true, that the abettors of it profess to believe, with Christians, man's future restoration. But if man be a mere combination of atoms, when that combination is broken by death, the Being formed by it is annihilated. A reunion of the same particles will constitute a new Being, having no moral respect to what happened to the first, neither stained with its blame, nor inheriting its merit. Indeed imagination cannot combine together the idea of merit and matter, because all the motions or actions (if we could use the term) of matter must be necessary and mechanical. The villain who *murders*, the Samaritan who *saves*, a man, deserve equal applause. Volition, or the act of thinking, brings into existence some new motion or form. But can we imagine such a power lodged with matter, which must itself receive from without every particular impression, every new direction?

Suppose matter capable of thinking, and the man to have every nerve employed in pursuing a certain train of reasoning; from what energy, what attribute of matter shall we deduce the power of stopping in the full career of inquiry, and taking at once an opposite path? If thinking be the effect of organization, we can suppose no principle, no power lodged in the man to controul or direct it. It must proceed mechanically, till it be stopt mechanically. The man who reflects on what passeth in his mind, will perceive a difference between that inward act which weighs circumstances, and that which

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determines

from their equatorial settlement, flat nose, woolly head, projecting chin, high calves, and

determines him on action. But deliberation is incompatible with every notion of matter, because it must ever be forcibly carried away by the predominant weight or power. To deliberate on, or balance circumstances, must suppose some principle endowed with the power of election; but of this, matter, as matter, is incapable.

We cannot take into account what the Deity possibly can do in the plenitude of power. Wherever his works lie open to inquiry, we observe, that he invariably proceeds according to the original nature of the subject. Fire never freezes, frost never warms. But if the Deity give to matter the power of thinking, he superadds an attribute analogous to no other quality of matter within our knowledge. He can give to a bull the form and attributes of an horse. But is not the bull annihilated, and a new animal formed in his stead? In like manner, to give to matter the ability of thinking, it must be changed into spirit, because the attribute of thinking is incompatible with matter, even as the distinguishing qualities of an horse cannot co-exist with those of a bull.

The weight of a material being is the weight of its parts taken together, and may be divided into as many lesser weights as there are component parts; its extent is a number of extents, in proportion to the number of its extended parts; and thus it holds of every quality, with which we are acquainted, except this new discovered attribute, no new quality being produced by the composition. We can affirm nothing of the whole that may not be affirmed in part of every particle. But we cannot thus divide volition into parts, or scatter it among the several limbs or organs, nor even share it between the cerebrum and cerebellum. It is one simple uncompounded act.

If

and black skin, we come to fact. Now we know, that house negroes, who are generally Creoles, and are conversant with their white masters, have all the address, intrigue, and cunning of family servants in Europe. In their masters they can mark the ridiculous point, the improper conduct, and often give these superior beings that advice, which they have not wisdom enough to follow; often manage their foibles, and mould them to their own interest. If, according to the Marchioness d'Ancre, favouritism and influence be marks of superiority, many West-Indian families must allow a preference to the Africans.

Negroes are capable of learning any thing that requires attention and correctness of manner. They have powers of description and mimickry that would not have dis-

If it be necessary to suppose a principle distinct from matter, to give form, motion, order, and design to things, may we not also suppose, that such creatures as men, who feel these active powers within themselves to a certain degree, may also be endowed with a portion of that spirit, which alone can begin and impress motion on inert matter.

Merit has been ascribed to him who neglected the body to have leisure to improve the mind; but on this scheme it is entirely absurd. He who cares for the body cares for the whole man. A glutton is not an object of ridicule, but of sober praise; he is employed in perfecting his ability to think.

graced the talents of our modern Aristophanes. The distillation of rum, the tempering of the cane juice for sugar, which may be considered as nice chemical operations, are universally committed to them. They become good mechanics ; they use the square and compass, and easily become masters of whatever business they are put to. They have a particular turn for music, and often attain a considerable proficiency in it without the advantage of a master. Negroe sick nurses acquire a surprizing skill in the cure of ordinary diseases, and often conquer disorders that have baffled an host of regulars. Nor want they emulation, in whatever their observation can reach. Hence our black beaus, black belles, black gamesters, black keepers, black quacks, black conjurers, and all that variety of character, which strikes in their masters, or promises to add to their own dignity or interest. But what can we expect them to attempt in the higher departments of reason ? Their slavish employments and condition ; their being abandoned to the caprice of any master ; the subjection in which it is thought necessary to keep them all ; these things depress their minds, and
subdue

subdue whatever is manly, spirited, ingenuous, independent, among them. And these are weights sufficient to crush a first-rate human genius.

Had it been the lot of a paradoxical Hume, or of a benevolent Kaims, to have cultivated the sugar-cane, under a planter, in one of our old islands ; the first probably would have tried to have eked out his scanty pitance of two pounds of flour or grain per week, by taking up the profession of a John Crowman, or conjurer ; and doubtless would have got many a flogging for playing tricks with, and imposing on the credulity of his fellows, to cheat them of their allowance. The turn of the other to works of taste might have expressed itself in learning to blow a rude sort of music from his nostril, through an hollowed piece of stick ; or, if blessed with an indulgent master, he might have learned to play by ear a few minuets, and fiddle a few country dances, to enable the family and neighbours to pass an evening cheerfully together.

The truth is, a depth of cunning that enables them to over-reach, conceal, deceive, is the only province of the mind left for

them, as slaves, to occupy. And this they cultivate, and enjoy the fruits of, to a surprising degree. I have, as a magistrate, heard examinations and defences of culprits, that for quibbling, subterfuges, and subtilty, would have done credit to the abilities of an attorney, most notoriously conversant in the villainous tricks of his profession. Their command of countenance is so perfect, as not to give the least clue for discovering the truth; nor can they be caught tripping in a story. Nothing in the turn or degree of their mental faculties, distinguishes them from Europeans, though some difference must appear, if they were of a different or an inferior race.

I had a young fellow, who was a notorious gambler, idler, liar, and man of pleasure; yet so well did he lay his schemes, so plausibly did he on all occasions account for his time and conduct, that I, who could not punish unless I could convince the culprit that I had undoubted proof of his guilt, was hardly ever able to find an opportunity of correcting him. This lad, when he came a boy from Africa, shewed marks of sentiment, and of a training above the

the common run of negroes. But slavery, even in the mildest degree, and his accompanying with slaves, gave him so worthless, dissipated a turn, that I was obliged to send him out of the family, and have him taught a trade in hopes of his reformation. By this he insensibly acquired a little application, and has since attached himself to a wife. His father, he says, was a man of property, had a large household, and many wives. He was kidnapped.

There is another lad, who could stand without flinching to be cut in pieces by the whip, and not utter a groan. As whipping was a triumph, instead of a punishment to him, I was obliged to overlook the most notorious faults, or affect generously to pardon them, rather than pretend to correct them. Yet this proceeds not from insensibility of pain, for if bleeding be prescribed for him when sick, he cries like a child, and shrinks from the operation. About twelve years ago he was caught in a fault, that by the custom of the colony would have justified his master in carrying his punishment to any degree, short of extremity. Pains were taken to set the

enormity of it before him, and he was freely pardoned, and his fellows were strictly forbidden ever to upbraid him with it. Since that time he has behaved remarkably well and trust-worthy, and shewn a very uncommon attachment to the family. A third boy, who is sensible as a little lord of every affront offered to his dignity, could stand with the sullen air of a stoic to receive the severest correction.

In truth, in spite of the disadvantages under which they labour, individuals, on particular occasions, have shewn an elevation of sentiment that would have done honour to a Spartan. The Spectator, No. 215, has celebrated a rude instance in two negroes, in the island of St. Christopher, which on inquiry I find to be true. I will confirm this by the relation of a deed, that happened within these thirty years, for which I have no name. As I had my information from a friend of the master's, in the master's presence, who acknowledged it to be genuine, the truth of it is indisputable. The only liberty I have taken with it, has been to give words to the sentiment that inspired it.

Quashi

Quashi was brought up in the family with his master, as his play-fellow, from his childhood. Being a lad ofowardly parts, he rose to be driver, or black overseer, under his master, when the plantation fell to him by succession. He retained for his master the tenderness that he had felt in childhood for his play-mate ; and the respect with which the relation of master inspired him, was softened by the affection which the remembrance of their boyish intimacy kept alive in his breast. He had no separate interest of his own, and in his master's absence redoubled his diligence, that his affairs might receive no injury from it. In short, here was the most delicate, yet most strong, and seemingly indissoluble tie, that could bind master and slave together.

Though the master had judgment to know when he was well served, and policy to reward good behaviour, he was inexorable when a fault was committed ; and when there was but an apparent cause of suspicion, he was too apt to let prejudice usurp the place of proof. Quashi could not exculpate himself to his satisfaction, for something

something done contrary to the discipline of the plantation, and was threatened with the ignominious punishment of the cart-whip; and he knew his master too well, to doubt of the performance of his promise.

A negroe, who has grown up to manhood, without undergoing a solemn cart-whipping, as some by good chance will, especially if distinguished by any accomplishment among his fellows, takes pride in what he calls the smoothness of his skin, its being unrazed by the whip; and he would be at more pains, and use more diligence to escape such a cart-whipping, than many of our lower sort would use to shun the gallows. It is not uncommon for a sober good negroe to stab himself mortally, because some boy-overseer has flogged him, for what he reckoned a trifle, or for his caprice, or threatened him with a flogging, when he thought he did not deserve it. Quashi dreaded this mortal wound to his honour, and slipt away unnoticed, with a view to avoid it.

It is usual for slaves, who expect to be punished for their own fault, or their master's caprice, to go to some friend of their master's, and beg him to carry them home, and

and mediate for them. This is found to be so useful, that humane masters are glad of the pretence of such mediation, and will secretly procure it to avoid the necessity of punishing for trifles ; it otherwise not being prudent to pass over without correction, a fault once taken notice of ; while by this method, an appearance of authority and discipline is kept up, without the severity of it. Quashi therefore withdrew, resolved to shelter himself, and save the glossy honours of his skin, under favour of this custom, till he had an opportunity of applying to an advocate. He lurked among his master's negroe huts, and his fellow slaves had too much honour, and too great a regard for him, to betray to their master the place of his retreat. Indeed, it is hardly possible in any case, to get one slave to inform against another, so much more honour have they than Europeans of low condition.

The following day a feast was kept, on account of his master's nephew then coming of age ; amidst the good humour of which, Quashi hoped to succeed in his application ; but before he could execute his design, perhaps just as he was setting out to go and solicit

solicit this mediation, his master, while walking about his fields, fell in with him. Quashi, on discovering him, ran off, and the master, who is a robust man, pursued him. A stone, or a clod, tripped Quashi up, just as the other reached out his hand to seize him. They fell together, and wrestled for the mastery, for Quashi also was a stout man, and the elevation of his mind added vigour to his arm. At last, after a severe struggle, in which each had been several times uppermost, Quashi got firmly seated on his master's breast, now panting and out of breath, and with his weight, his thighs, and one hand, secured him motionless. He then drew out a sharp knife, and while the other lay in dreadful expectation, helpless, and shrinking into himself, he thus addressed him. "Master,
" I was bred up with you from a child;
" I was your play-mate when a boy; I
" have loved you as myself; your interest
" has been my study; I am innocent of the
" cause of your suspicion; had I been guilty,
" my attachment to you might have
" pleaded for me. Yet you have condemned
" me to a punishment, of which I must
" ever

"ever have borne the disgraceful marks ;
"thus only can I avoid them." With these words, he drew the knife with all his strength across his own throat, and fell down dead without a groan, on his master, bathing him in his blood,

Had this man been properly educated ; had he been taught his importance as a member of society ; had he been accustomed to weigh his claim to, and enjoy the possession of the unalienable rights of humanity ; can any man suppose him incapable of making a progress in the knowledge of religion, in the researches of reason, or the works of art ? Or can it be affirmed, that a man, who amidst the disadvantages, and gloom of slavery, had attained a refinement of sentiment, to which language cannot give a name, which leaves the bulk of polished society far behind, could want abilities to acquire arts and sciences, which we too often find coupled with a fawning, a mean, a flavish spirit ? Others may, I will not believe it.

This is a truly mournful instance of a nobleness and grandeur of mind in a negroe. The following, though allied to distress, is of a less awful nature, but will shew, that all the nobler qualities of the heart

heart are not monopolized by the white race.

Joseph Rachel was a black trader in Barbadoes; he dealt chiefly in the retail way, and was so fair and complaisant in business, that in a town filled with little peddling shops, his doors were thronged with customers. I have often dealt with him, and found him remarkably honest and obliging. If any one knew not where to procure an article, Joseph would be at pains to search it out, to supply him, without making an advantage of it. In short, his character was so fair, his manners so generous, that the best people shewed him a regard, which they often deny men of their own colour, because not blessed with like goodness of heart.

In 1756 a fire happened, which burned down great part of the town, and ruined many of the inhabitants. Joseph luckily lived in a quarter that escaped the destruction, and expressed his thankfulness, by softening the distresses of his neighbours. Among those who had lost their all by this heavy misfortune, was a man to whose family Joseph, in the early part of life, owed some obligations. This man, by too great hospitality,

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an excess common enough in the West-Indies, had involved his affairs, before the fire happened, and his estate lying in houses, that event intirely ruined him; he escaping with only the clothes on his back. Amidst the cries of misery and want, which excited Joseph's compassion, this man's unfortunate situation claimed particular notice. The generous, the open temper of the sufferer, the obligations that Joseph had to his family, were special and powerful motives for acting towards him the friendly part.

Joseph held his bond for sixty pounds sterling. "Unfortunate man," says he, "this shall never come against thee. Would heaven thou could settle all thy other matters as easily! But how am I sure that I shall keep in this mind: may not the love of gain, especially, when, by length of time, thy misfortune has become familiar to me, return with too strong a current, and bear down my fellow-feeling before it? But for this I have a remedy. Never shalt thou apply for the assistance of any friend against my avarice." He got up, ordered a current account that the man had with him, to a considerable amount, to be drawn out, and in

in a whim, that might have called up a smile on the face of charity, filled his pipe, sat down again, twisted the bond, and lighted his pipe with it. While the account was drawing out, he continued smoking, in a state of mind that a monarch might envy. When finished, he went in search of his friend, with the account discharged, and the mutilated bond in his hand. On meeting with him, he presented the papers to him with this address. "Sir, I am sensibly affected with your misfortunes; the obligations that I have received from your family, give me a relation to every branch of it. I know that your inability to satisfy for what you owe, gives you more uneasiness than the loss of your own substance. That you may not be anxious on my account in particular, accept of this discharge, and the remains of your bond. I am over paid in the satisfaction that I feel, from having done my duty. I beg you to consider this only as a token of the happiness that you will impart to me, whenever you put it in my power to do you a good office." One may easily guess at the man's feelings, on being thus generously

generously treated, and how much his mind must have been strengthened to bear up against his misfortunes. I knew him a few years after this ; he had got a small post in one of the forts, and preserved a decent appearance.

But his hospitable turn continued even after he had lost the means of indulging it. He has often invited five or six acquaintances, or strangers, to spend the evening when he has not had even a candle to light up before them. Whenever his servant saw him come home thus attended, and heard him call away, as in his better days, his resouroe was to run over to Joseph, and inform him that such and such gentlemen were to sup with his master. Immediately the spermaceti candle, and punch, and wine of the best quality were on the table, as if by magic ; and soon after Joseph's servants appeared, bringing in a neat supper, and waiting on the company. All this was done without a prospect of return, purely to indulge his gratitude, and support his friend's credit. And will any man pretend to look down with contempt on one capable of such generosity, because the colour of his skin is black ?

Some readers, perhaps, may give Joseph more credit for the following story. A colonel _____, a most penurious miser, used to call frequently at Joseph's shop, on pretence of cheapening cocoa: he was always sure to carry away as much for a taste as his pocket would hold, but never bought any. Joseph, at first, was at a loss what to do. He knew, that, being a negroe, his evidence would not be taken in court, even for the value of a penny against a white man. But the colonel continuing his depredations, he was loth to see his cocoa diminish daily before him without any thing in return for it. He therefore hired a white man for clerk, and ordered him to weigh out a bag of cocoa, and keep it particularly under his own care, to supply the colonel with tastings whenever he should call. The colonel soon emptied the bag, and then Joseph delivered in his account. The colonel stormed, swore, and threatened till out of breath, when Joseph took the opportunity of informing his honour of the steps he had taken. His avarice now alarmed him with the expences of a law-suit: and suggested that being so fairly taken in, there was nothing to be done, in prudence,

prudence, but to pay the money peaceably. By this innocent stratagem Joseph got rid of the colonel's taunting visits.

I shall only give one more instance in favour of the negroes; though a volume might easily be filled. A lieutenant of a regiment in garrison at St. Christopher's died, and left his son an orphan. A particular family had promised him, on his death-bed, to take care of his boy; but he was wholly abandoned, and forced to keep among the negroe children, and live on such scraps as he could find. In this state, he caught that loathsome disease the yaws, which became a new reason for giving him up to his fate. In this ulcerated condition, Babay, a poor negress, found him, took him into her hut, got him cured, and maintained him till he was able to work for himself. The first money that he earned went to purchase her freedom. He took her home to his house, and, as long as she lived afterwards, which might be upwards of forty years, treated her with the most respectful kindness. He gave her a most expensive burial, and had a funeral sermon preached over her. As that sermon was delivered before people acquainted with her character, and mentioned such circumstan-

ces as I wish here to remark, I shall give an extract of what was addressed to the slaves that attended, relating to her. " This good " woman was like many of you, a slave; and, " as such, laboured under every disadvantage " which you can plead for not doing your " duty; yet, in this situation, she shewed, " in her conduct, the noblest fruits of re- " ligion and charity. A helpless child, left " an orphan, in a strange country, far from " any relation or even acquaintance to his " family, abandoned by those who under- " took to rear him, from her alone could " raise pity, or engage attention. When left, " by all of his own rank and colour, to " perish in a loathsome disease, though son " to a servant of the public, with whom every " true lover of his country should have " sympathized, she, alone, lodged him, " nursed him carefully, got him cured, and " put him in a way to provide for himself. " This instance of generosity, found in one " of her condition, is a proof that noble and " disinterested actions are not, as many think, " confined to advantages of birth or educa- " tion; for she had nothing to direct her " but God's grace working on a tractable " heart:

“ heart: and this benevolent temper shewed
“ itself in every part of her behaviour through
“ life, and was accompanied in her with a
“ true sense of religion. She was well ac-
“ quainted with what she ought to know and
“ believe; and always spoke of religion with
“ an earnestness, and seriousness, and know-
“ ledge, which I wish were more general than
“ I have found it among those who esteem
“ themselves her betters. Here then is a
“ shining example of goodness, on your own
“ level, for your imitation.”*

* The following thoughts have been communicated lately to the author by a humane intelligent sea officer, who, in his command on foreign stations, did not think he went out of his line by pleading and promoting the cause of humanity. They are particularly pertinent in this place to prove Africans proper objects of improvement and police.

“ I have talked, I have written; I have often blushed for the
“ unnatural tyranny exercised in our West Indian isles; where
“ Protestants even exceed Papists in barbarity to the unfortunate
“ slaves that have become their purchased property. Particu-
“ larly, I have, in the warmest manner, recommended their
“ imitation of the Roman Catholics in bestowing baptism on
“ their slaves, inforging my argument from this consideration:”
“ You acknowledge the Christian path, in which you walk,
“ to lead to a happy future state; how can you then, as men or
“ Christians, refuse that to your slaves, which you believe will
“ intitle them to salvation?” “ I cannot boast of the impre-
“ fions that these arguments made in our Western Archipelago.
“ But, finding the planters in the colonies adjoining to Spanish

“ settlements, complaining that their slaves were daily desert-
“ ing from them, I thought I had found an argument to urge
“ intirely in their own way:” “ Your slaves desert to the
“ Spaniards, because they grant them greater privileges than
“ you do, and make Christians of them. Use you the same
“ methods, and they will not think of leaving you.”

“ The negroes along the sea-coast of Africa (particularly
“ among the French) are well-informed, easy, kind, generous,
“ and have a better sense of right and wrong than any other peo-
“ ple I have ever visited. I was thrown among them in a state of
“ wretchedness and sickness, with seventy-seven dying men, be-
“ ing abandoned by our own people, who refused me assistance
“ and medicines. I cast myself on the charity of savages, and
“ received more instances of compassion and goodness from them
“ than from all the Christians I have ever known. From this
“ exemplary benignity in this people, who are inhabitants
“ about Cape Verd, may be collected the probability of intro-
“ ducing freedom and Christianity among them.”

“ On the southern continent of Africa the natives are well
“ informed, well clad, dwell in superb houses, abound in cattle
“ and other possessions. Some Porteguese are settled among
“ them, but, I believe, they draw their knowledge, mer-
“ chandise, and grandeur from their communication with
“ Mozambique, Arabia, and Egypt. The places I chiefly
“ refer to, are Paulo Loando and St. Philip de Buengala.”

C H A P. V.

Plan for the Improvement and Conversion of African Slaves.

I HAVE now gone through the several preliminary articles that respect slaves in our sugar colonies. I have described their condition at present. I have shewn that there would be good policy and much profit, both to the state and the master, in advancing it; that this advancement must go hand in hand with their instruction in religion; and, again, that instruction is necessary to make them good and useful subjects. I have vindicated for them the natural equality and common origin of mankind. I have claimed, as their due, the attention of government. I have endeavoured to interest humanity, policy, and religion in their favour. It only remains to point out the method in which these should co-

operate for their advantage. That which I am now to offer, I propose not as the best possible, but as the most practicable method, having respect to the selfishness and prejudices of the age. Were government and people once well awakened to their own interest, and heartily inclined, something much more promising might be struck out. The chief advantages of the following plan is, that it may be set on foot by government, without depending on the caprice of individuals, or affecting their interest; that it will be gradual in its operation, and therefore more likely to accommodate itself to the ordinary course of human affairs. At the worst, it adds only one more to the many Utopian schemes that volunteer reformers produce for the benefit of the heedless public. Should it ever be found as impracticable in itself, as it is in respect of me, it may lead some more happy man to a scheme both practicable and successful. In the mean time it may contribute to soften their present treatment; and it will be a testimony of the author's affection to the cause of humanity, religion, and his country. The event must be left to Providence. It will be adapted to the state of a parti-

particular colony; but may easily be accommodated to others. I shall only premise, that the several hints occasionally given in the course of the work, and what has been suggested in the case of particular plantations, chap. III. sect. V. is offered to every other owner of slaves, as far as circumstances will permit.

S E C T. I.

Establishment of Clergy, and their Duty among Slaves.

The island of St. Christopher's, of which we particularly treat, is divided into nine parishes, and is, at present, supplied by five ministers; the emoluments of two parishes being barely sufficient for the decent support of a family, without supposing any provision made for a widow and children. But, to carry on our plan of reformation among slaves; nay, indeed for the due support of an established religion among the white inhabitants, it would be necessary that each parish should have its own incumbent. This would give the proportion of one minister to about

about 3000 inhabitants; but it would require the provision allotted for their maintenance to be increased. Of this provision I shall not at present treat; though, whenever it becomes an object of police, it will be easy to propose a fund for their decent maintenance without any sensible new expence to government or people, and chiefly by changing the mode of certain present imposts. In the proportion here suggested, many parishes, especially in Jamaica, would require to be divided; but the ministers could easily and profitably for the colony be provided for there by allotments of unappropriated funds.*

I would propose also a school to be established in each parish; the school-master

* Barbadoes contains eleven parishes, each with its minister; the town parish has also a fixed curate. In Antigua there are six parishes, and six ministers. In Montserrat there are four parishes, and two ministers. In Nevis five parishes, and three ministers. In Grenada there are usually two ministers without appointments; it is the same in Dominica. In St. Vincent's there are two ministers, and very small appointments. In Tortola there is no fixed minister. In Anguilla the minister has been long dumb for want of a maintenance. In Jamaica there are nineteen parishes, some of them as large as the whole Leward Island government, and some of them without church or minister.

to be under the minister's direction, and to assist in instructing and bringing forward the young children. A house, the place of parish clerk, and some other small appointment, with the benefit of scholars, would always procure decent men for the office.†

Suppose then a proper number of sober, pious ministers settled in the colonies, each in his own cure, and employed in the duties of his function, supported by government, and encouraged by good men. Let the minister, every Sunday, perform the usual morning service to his white parishioners, and such sensible negroes as can attend; in

† Indeed a very small proportion of those immense sums that are thrown away under pretence of educating their children in England, would procure men properly qualified to settle in these schools in the islands, which would not only save to the parents much needless expence, but also preserve the morals of the youth, and train them up to be useful to themselves and families. A young West-Indian, consigned to a sugar-factor to be educated at a distance from his father, soon begins to know no other relationship between him and his parent, than that of banker. He makes expensive connections, acquires habits of dissipation, is never made to feel his own weight, and seldom learns to turn out usefully in life. Where parents have not the vanity or are not in circumstances to send them to England, but content themselves with giving them an useful education near them, West-Indian children shew that they want neither capacity nor application.

the afternoon let the service be adapted to the negroes. Instead of a common sermon, let him explain to them, in course, a chapter of the New Testament, making them intimately acquainted with the mission and history of our Saviour, and our relation to him, as the immediate Creator, Head, and Redeemer of the world. Let the clergyman frequently give a short exposition of the apostle's creed, in easy terms, and explain the ten commandments in words adapted to their capacity.

Let the ministers jointly compose forms of devotion, some to be used in private by the negroes, others for their field morning and evening prayers, and others, more comprehensive, to be used by the whole gang on Sundays, in the plantation. Let them be drawn up short, simple, instructive, expressive of their relation to God, to a Saviour, to Society, and of the respect that a candidate for heaven owes to himself. Indeed it would be found a great advantage in carrying on the work, if the forms were composed to serve in all the colonies generally. Masters should be exhorted to send, at convenient times, their most sensible slaves to the minister, to be instructed

structed in these forms, that they may teach the rest, and take the lead in the plantation evening and morning devotions. If the master, manager, or overseer, were constantly to lead their Sunday plantation devotions, it would have an excellent effect. Negroes, who are well treated and in spirits, sing at work. A few easy single stanzas might be collected or composed, to be used instead of their common songs. In every thing drawn up for them, the expression should be simple, and the meaning obvious.

Let the minister visit the plantations in rotation, at convenient times, to inquire into the behaviour and improvement of the slaves, to commend, reprove, admonish, and pray with them. To give him respect and influence, let all be obliged to appear before him decently clothed.

Let him pay a particular attention to children; that while their minds are tender, before their dispositions be soured by the impositions of slavery, they may make some progress in the knowledge of their duty. As they may be better spared from plantation work than the rest, they may attend on the minister on particular week days for instruction.

In

In common cases, no culprit should be punished by the master, who can find a sensible sober negroe to be surety for his good behaviour: but both surety and culprit should be frequently admonished by the minister of the nature of the engagement; and this practice would give him many opportunities of imprinting on their minds the obligations of virtue, the claims of society, the difference between right and wrong. In short, one circumstance that has happened among themselves, properly discussed before them and imprinted on their minds, will have a better and more lasting effect than a thousand discourses on general good and evil.

Wherever there is room for shewing mercy, it should be done at the minister's intercession, that he may be considered as a mediator between the slave on one side, and the master and the law on the other. He should never appear in any other light among them than that of their instructor and benefactor, praying with them, interceding for them, or doing some good office to them; that their esteem for his person, and gratitude for his kindness, may stand to them in place of a law, may produce in them a love for

for his doctrine, and be a pledge of their good behaviour to the community. One cause of the author's little success among his own slaves was, doubtless, the necessity of mixing the authority of the master in domestic matters, with the exhortations of the teacher; and the superior success of the Moravians may be accounted for, from their being seen by their scholars, only in the benevolent light of instructors.

The ministers should have monthly meetings at each other's houses, to which well-disposed gentlemen of the neighbourhood should be occasionally invited: at these they might talk over their difficulties, their successes, their plans. Every measure should be carefully discussed before carried into execution; the plan of instruction should be uniform; the prayers, precepts, hymns, should all speak one language. And we might hope that the ministers, relieved by a decent provision from worldly care, countenanced by government, respected by good men, and encouraged by each other in this good work, would soon find pleasure in it, and see it prosper in their hands.

But

But some greater care should be taken in the choice of persons designed for this labour, and of candidates sent over from the colonies for ordination, than has been hitherto usual. It is now growing into a custom, in the West-Indies, for men that have dissipated their patrimony, to flee to the church as their last refuge from poverty, often with very slender pretensions respecting education, and less respecting decency of character. Yet, if any distinction were proper, the colonists, even setting aside this plan of the conversion of their slaves, by reason of their usual carelessness and dissipation, require a superior attention to the character of their pastors. Perhaps the fittest persons that could be sent out would be discreet curates from England, accustomed to teaching, whose hopes of preferment are small, to whom these settlements would be a desirable advancement. The Society for Propagating the Gospel might have a committee to examine, select, and recommend them to the several governors.

S E C T. II.

General Improvement of Slaves.

I have vindicated the natural capacity of African slaves, have laid before the reader their present condition, have proved that to advance them in religion and social life would profit both the public and their masters, and have proposed a plan for their instruction. We may now make this inference respecting the original design of this work. Were the yoke of slavery made to sit more easy on their necks; were they taught to think more justly of themselves, more moderately of their masters; did their condition admit of the enjoyment of the common conveniences of life; were these extended and secured to them; were their families and offspring to be considered as their own, not wantonly to be torn from them at the caprice, or to pay for the extravagance, of their tyrant; then would they be found capable of arts that are useful in society here, and of extending their own views to futurity. Then, when they had become sensible of

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their relation to God, would his religion, which we wish to introduce, have a fair chance among them; they would esteem themselves more worthy of it, more nearly connected with it, more strictly obliged to inquire into its doctrines, and conform their lives to its laws. Then, in respect of intellect, would they be found equal to the people of any country.

French slaves enjoy a great advantage for the admission of religion over English slaves, in the familiarity that French manners permit them to live in with white people: an advantage that is increased by the presence of their owners, who generally live and converse with them, superintend and partake with them in their labours, instead of submitting them to hirelings; many of whom, in sullen silence, think of nothing but of extorting labour out of them, at the expence of health, life, and every human feeling; and are, indeed, often obliged to do this to keep up the remittances, and preserve their places. The above-mentioned circumstances in the French islands conceal the distance between master and slave, make the distinction easier to the latter, and, by exciting equally their affection and ambition, pave the way for

for introducing among them the customs and religion of their masters.

The difficulties which the French had to conquer in their first attempts to convert slaves cannot now be ascertained. But, long since, custom and time have made the work easy to them. Religion, as they teach it, places particular merit in the work of conversion, which is a spur to their piety. The Creole slaves know no other religion than Christianity. The new African slaves are gradually absorbed into the mass. With the first rudiments of a new language, they draw in the precepts of a religion that mixes itself with every mode of common life; as foreigners are said to learn English, by the oaths and imprecations with which our tongue abounds. Thus they acquire the religion gradually, with the customs of their new country, while attention and curiosity are strong on them, before they have been put to hard or disagreeable labour, to disgust them with the manners and worship of their masters. It must be owned, indeed, that the Romish mode of worship, consisting of pomp and ceremony, is better calculated to strike, *at first sight*, the imagination of ignorant people, than our simple ritual. A remark,

that may explain the attention which a very opposite sect, the Moravians, pay to forms in managing savages, and the stress that they lay on the description of our Saviour's sufferings and crucifixion; as if it was necessary for improving the mind, to make religion a mechanic exercise, and draw piety as an object of sense.

On the other hand, till the minds of our slaves be more enlightened, till their situation be made more easy, till they have a refuge against the effects of the caprice, ignorance, cruelty, poverty of their masters, till they think themselves intitled to the protection of society, we cannot expect them to take their proper rank in the state, nor to make any considerable progress in religious knowledge. At present they know and feel nothing of society, but the hardships and punishments that it cruelly and capriciously inflicts; they lie far beyond its care, and out of the circle of its comforts. And I believe it will be found, that Christianity has seldom made any great progres, except where society was in an advanced state. Nor has it supported itself, but in the polished parts of Europe and America. And how,

how, rationally speaking, can it happen otherwise? A conformity with revealed religion supposeth a conquest over the selfish passions; and unless we be first accustomed to sacrifice, in a certain degree, these passions for the advantages of society, which come home to our immediate feelings, we shall hardly be willing to sacrifice them for the hopes of religion. Indeed the benevolence or charity, which is the corner-stone of Christianity, is evidently a refinement on justice, which is the bond of society. But, can we refine on a law that doth not exist? As religion must be built on a foundation of law; so, in respect of practice, it may be called the perfection of society: it brings futurity into the aid of law, and gives a moral sanction to the edicts of authority. Could it find admittance among savages, it would of necessity polish them, and introduce society among them. Modern philosophers and politicians, even while exerting their influence to undermine its foundations, give religion this testimony: “ Though too vulgar a study for a “ fine spirit, and its precepts too mean for “ his free sentiments, yet religion is an “ excellent instrument in the magistrates

“ hands to make the mob harmless, sober,
“ industrious, honest, and obedient.”

And conformably to this reasoning we find, it was in the cities, where society had improved the understanding, that the apostles and their fellow-labourers chiefly made converts to Christianity. A Pagan or country clown, and an heathen or infidel, soon became equivalent terms. Different, indeed, is the case now, when our fine wits, (who, had they lived in the early ages of Christianity, merely for the credit of their parts, would have been most orthodox) are ashamed of the religion of their fathers; and, rather than profess any religion in common with mankind, will maintain the silliest paradox, the most

† There is at last, indeed, one exception in the newly erected states of America: they have almost generally declared against an established religion as a necessary part of their constitutions; the success cannot for some time be known.

The good effects of religion in improving society, is nobly testified in the success of the Moravians among the savages of Greenland: by gradually introducing Christianity and industry together, of selfish precipitate savages, they have made a band of provident, sober, useful, sympathizing brethren. Their progress there is the triumph of religion over ignorant unassisted reason. Yet our slaves are much more civilized than these originally were; but liberty, nature's inheritance to man, more than compensated to them the difference.

degra-

degrading dogma. I wish, indeed, we could say, that good manners, and obedience to the laws, were not generally sent away with what they affect to call bigotry: so indissolubly bound together are the characters of a good citizen and pious man.

In general the faculties of the mind must be expanded to a certain degree, before religion will take root, or flourish among a people; and a certain proportion of civil liberty is necessary, on which to found that expansion of the mind, which moral or religious liberty requires.* By this assertion I exclude not particular instances; but such neither form nor confute general rules. To bring this home to the case of our slaves; the great obstacle to government in bringing about this point, setting aside its own

* When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, he was under the necessity of training them up to be an independent people, by multiplied forms and strict discipline, for the space of forty years. And it is apparent, from their behaviour during this long period, that slavery had so thoroughly debased their minds, as to have rendered them incapable of the exertions necessary for their settlement in the promised land, till all those who had grown up as slaves in Egypt, had fallen in the wilderness, and laws and regulations worthy of a free people had taken place among them. This is a case full in point, and may suggest hints worthy of the legislature.

carelessness in such things, is the alteration that it would at first make in private property. This it is true we have in chap. 2, sect. 3. shewn to be more in appearance than in fact. But such are our prejudices, that any law to improve the condition of our slaves, or to instruct them in the principles of religion, would be too apt to be considered as an incroachment on their masters property, and an hinderance of their profit.

Still allowing this prejudice its full operation, something considerable might be done by parliament, by colony legislatures, by willing conscientious masters. Expedients would offer themselves, methods might be discovered, to advance the condition, and promote the religious interests of slaves, and save also, or even improve, their labour to their masters, and the state. Nay, the interest of the state would ultimately be advanced by every indulgence extended to them. On the other hand, little can any other individuals attempt, and less can they effect, except to pray that the minds of our governors may be enlightened to see the honour and advantage of this undertaking.

We

We come now to suggest such an advancement of their condition, as may lay the foundation of that improvement, in morality and religion, which is the object of this work.

S E C T. III.

Privileges granted, and Police extended to
Slaves.

We have observed, that slaves are hardly in any instance considered as objects of police, being abandoned to the management, or rather caprice, of their several masters. Nor doth law take notice of them, but to enforce power, which, without such assistance, too frequently lays reason and humanity bleeding at its feet. Our laws, indeed, as far as they respect slaves, are only licenced modes of exercising tyranny on them; for they are not made parties to them, though their lives and feelings be concluded by them. As well may directions for angling be said to be laws made for dumb fish, as our colony regulations for whipping, hanging, crucifying, burning negroes,

negroes, be called laws made for slaves. To make them objects of civil government must therefore be an essential part of every plan of improvement that respects slaves; so that while obnoxious to the *penalties* of the law, they may be intitled to its *security*; and while law leaves them under the *management* of a master, it may protect them from his *barbary*.

A judge should therefore be appointed to determine disputes of consequence between master and slave, as in the French colonies.* The power of the master should be restrained within certain limits. He should not be suffered to maim, beat, or bruise wretches with a stick. To slit ears and noses, to break legs, or castrate,† should make a man infamous for ever, and, equally with the greater excommunication, incapacitate him from being evidence, or taking inheritan-

* If it be objected that the appointment of a judge would encourage slaves to be running constantly to him with complaints, and annihilate the master's just authority; the example of Athens formerly, and France now, may be adduced in proof, that no such effects necessarily follow.

† The last instance of this enormity was, I believe, perpetrated by an English surgeon in Granada.

ces; and much more should such cruelties shut the door against him from sitting in an assembly, or council, as a legislator. The sentiment of a gentleman, a native of St. Christopher's, pleased me on this subject.
" Were a white servant to behave to me as
" my slaves often do, I should be provoked
" to beat him most unmercifully. But how
" can I strike a wretch, who dare not strike
" again, who has no law to which he may
" apply for satisfaction for my excess, who
" has none but myself to look up to for
" protection against my violence?" What
pity is it, since society interposes not, that
such sentiments should be uncommon?

If any slave has been flagrantly ill treated by a master, the master should have a mark of infamy, as above, fixed on him, and the slave should be made free without price: or, if he be unacquainted with any trade by which he can earn his bread, he should be sold for the benefit of the public, at an easy rate, to some considerate man. To make a slave free, who cannot earn an honest living, would be inhuman and impolitic. It is letting loose on society a thief in despair.

The

The marriages of slaves should be put under some better regulation than at present ; when a man may have what wives he pleases, and either of them may break the yoke at their caprice. Nothing would more humanize slaves, and improve their condition, than their acquiring a property in their wives and families, and having a restraint laid on the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes. Marriage, or a family, is the embryo of society ; it contains the principles, and seeds of every social virtue. The care of a family would make them considerate, sober, frugal, industrious. An ambition to promote the condition of their children, would sharpen and improve their talents. They would avoid every fault, or meanness, that might hurt the interest or credit of such dear relatives ; even as in polished society, a man who is married, is generally found a more useful and trust worthy citizen, than he who continues single.*

The

* I admire that policy of the Athenians, which allowed no unmarried man to hold any place in the magistracy, army, or navy. They did not depend on *his* fidelity to distribute justice, or defend the state, who had not given to the public a wife and children, as sureties of his good behaviour.

I mean

The minimum of a negroe's allowance for clothes and provisions should be settled by law. Slaves should be allowed at least Saturday afternoon, as in Jamaica, for their own work, and to wash their clothes. Sunday should be wholly their own, for the purposes of instruction, and rest from labour. Their little properties should be secured to them; their families should not be torn from them. All plantation slaves, as at present is the custom in Antigua, should be considered as fixed to the free-

I mean not here to censure men, who, like Newton, preserve themselves chaste and single, the more closely to apply to the study of nature, or the intricacies of science. Neither the common good, nor moral rectitude, require the matter to be so strictly urged. Let the poet court his muse, or the philosopher hold dalliance with nature, or sport in the fields of literature; we will not permit the cares of a family to interrupt his researches, or disturb his amusement. Matrimony claims only those in each sex, who find themselves drawn irresistibly to the other, and wishes only to sanctify their commerce. No plea can be used for the celibacy of those who keep not themselves chaste. There is a sorry selfishness in their stealing all that they value in the state, and leaving the cares to others. For they must acknowledge, that in every community a certain proportion must marry; and if it be a burden, why are they exempt? Not but if this were the place to prove it, marriage might be shewn to be, generally speaking, the only rational foundation for social happiness, and the state the God of nature appointed for man.

hold,

hold, that they may not be sold, or carried away wantonly at pleasure. It would then be the next natural step, to task them as proposed in note, page 129, and suffer them, by their extra labour, to work out their freedom; still taking care to keep as many of them attached to the soil, as might be wanted to carry on the staple manufactures of the colonies as day labourers.

These regulations would lay a foundation for that far distant view which we take of this subject; the time when liberty shall claim every exiled African for her own child. Their being connected with the soil, will draw after it certain personal rights, and all the claims of a family. Having once tasks assigned them, wages will follow, and the bargain become mutual and equal between the employer and employed.* If, on account of ill behaviour, or any particular cause, a master be under the necessity of parting with a plantation slave, or banishing

* One inseparable consequence of the communication of the *least* degree of liberty or privilege to slaves, would be a desire to be baptized, and to be considered as Christians; for this they think secures the possession of it to them. And much good might be done towards their instruction, by making a proper advantage of this bias to the religion of their masters.

him,

him, let it be done with the approbation of the judge; and let the transaction, with the reason assigned, be registered. In like manner should every decree given by the judge be registered.

To improve their minds, the slaves should be accustomed to determine, as jurors, on the behaviour of each other. This would insensibly lead them to distinguish between vice and virtue. What rendered the Grecian and Roman mobs (for their assemblies were no better) so superior to the nations around them, but the privilege of being constituted judges both of public measures and private causes, and, as such, of being daily improved by the public orations of their lawyers and statesmen? The frequent attendance on our courts of law, and as jury-men in the trial of causes, which most people in our little colonies are obliged to give, except they bribe off their appearance, imparts a precision and readiness in thinking to the colonists, that one shall in vain look for in the mother country in the same rank, on the same subjects. Yet they are often very unpolished beings, when Europe first sends them out among us.

Masters

Masters should be encouraged to grant freedom to such slaves as shewed merit, and promised to make good use of it; but they should be restrained from turning off slaves when become incapable of labour, as is often done, under pretence of giving them freedom. All colony laws, enacted on the narrow principle of personal distinctions to prevent or fetter manumission, should be annulled; such as those of Barbadoes and Granada, that fix a heavy fine to the public on the master who frees a slave. All mulattoes should be sent out free, trained to some trade or business at the age of thirty years. Children of mulattoe girls should be free from their birth, or from the commencement of their mother's freedom. Intendants should be appointed to see them put in time to such trade or business, as may best agree with their inclination, and the demands of the colony. This should be done at the expence of their fathers, and a sufficient sum might be deposited in the hands of the church-wardens, soon after their birth, to answer the purpose; the intendant keeping the church-wardens to their duty. This case supposes the mother to be free.

free. If a man has a mulattoe born to him by another man's negress, he should pay to her owner eight pounds sterl^{ing}, as soon as the child is weaned. It should then be considered as the master's child, to be sent out free as above. If the parent or master has neglected to instruct them in some useful calling, he should be fined in an annuity equal to their maintenance.

By these means, the number of free citizens would insensibly increase in the colonies, and add to their security and strength. A new rank of citizens, placed between the black and white races, would be established. They would naturally attach themselves to the white race, as the more honourable relation, and so become a barrier against the designs of the black. Nay, were the law extended to free every sensible negress (and they are generally domestics, and sempstresses) who should bring a mulattoe child by her master, or any man worth as much as would repay her value to her master, I see no ill consequences that could follow from the regulation. At least, if it checked this improper commerce between master and slave, it would promote

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legal, and more honourable connections with their own equals. Still thieves, and vagabond beggars, should be excepted from every privilege, and be kept, or reduced to slavery, whenever discovered; and if this were the law, under certain restrictions, even in Britain, much wealth and happiness would redound from it.

On these outlines of society, viz. the indissoluble tie of marriage, the claims of a family, the allowance of property, the ascertaining the hours and time of labour, or allotting it by task; the fixing the minimum of maintenance and clothing; the adjudging them to the soil; the making them arbiters of each other's conduct; the assigning them a protector or judge, to preserve their little privileges, and secure them against cruelty; in short, on the vindicating for them the common rights of humanity, would we erect a plan, that should look forward to their gradual improvement, and extend, by slow but sure steps, to the full participation of every social privilege. Thus secured from injury, thus partaking in the fruits of their own labour, they might be resigned to the care of the

pastors

pastors that we have proposed for them, to be built up in holiness, and the fear of God, and taught to look forward with resignation and hope, to a state where every hardship, every inequality, inseparable from the lot of humanity, shall be entirely removed, and fully compensated.

CONCLUSION.

I have now laid before the public what I supposed might bear the light; not all I have thought, not all I have written on the subject. In many points sentiment has struggled with the selfishness of the age, and been obliged to suppress many a generous wish: the feelings of benevolence have been forced to give way to the suggestions of narrow policy; and even a sense of the public interest has been made to yield to private prejudice. Yet, if our slaves were once accustomed to taste only a *few* of the sweets of society, a *little* of the security of being judged by known laws, they would double their application to procure the comforts and conveniences of life; and, with their

additional property, would naturally rise in their rank in society. Many, especially if our plan of working them by task were to take place, would, in time, be able to purchase their own freedom. Their demands for manufactures would increase, and extend our trade; they would acquire a love for the country and government that shewed this attention to them. The labour of such as became free might, for some time, be regulated on the same plan as that of labourers in England. Under the awe of, or rather assisted by, a few regular troops, they might safely be trusted with arms for the defence of themselves, their families, their own, and patron's property. Then would the colonies enjoy a security from foreign attacks that no protection from Europe can afford them.

The minds of these, our fellow-creatures, that are now drowned in ignorance, being thus opened and improved, the pale of reason would be enlarged; Christianity would receive new strength; liberty new subjects. The slave trade, in its present form the reproach of Britain, and threatening to hasten its downfal, might be made to take a new shape, and become ultimately a blessing to thou-

thousands of wretches, who, left in their native country, would have dragged out a life of miserable ignorance; unknowing of the hand that framed them; unconscious of the reason of which they were made capable; and heedless of the happiness laid up in store for them.*

Thus, by a timely interposition of the legislature, and a judicious attention to circumstances, might Britain acquire a considerable accession of strength, have its trade and taxes improved, and a large number of useful fellow-subjects, that are now sunk in misery and bondage, made happy here, and capable of happiness hereafter. And these are considerations that, surely, are sufficiently powerful to unite the worldling and politician, with the pious saint and sincere Christian, to carry on the scheme as one

* This is on the supposition that the slave trade could be conducted without that violence and injustice to individuals, and enormous loss of lives in the passage from Africa, and, during the seasoning in the colonies, that now accompanies it. For the greatest benefit that can possibly happen to a few cannot justify us for endeavouring it by murder, by violence, bad air, and famine, in making the experiment. They must offer themselves willingly for the voyage, and be better accommodated and treated during the course of it.

man,

man, since each would find his separate account in it. Honour, profit, piety, all join in the important request; all solicit to have their claims to this benefit considered.

And what glory would it be to Britain, what an object of emulation, to enlarge the benevolent plan of France and Spain, for improving the condition of their slaves; and to open a way for the admission of reason, religion, liberty, and law among creatures of our kind, at present deprived of every advantage, of every privilege, which, as partakers of our common nature, they are capable of and entitled to!

We have notoriously and continually thrust ourselves into the quarrels of others, and been lavish of our blood and treasure for the protection of strangers and the advancement of ungrateful rivals, whose good-will, even in appearance, we could retain no longer than while our assistance was useful to them. But these miserable wretches live only, *can* live only, for our profit, for our luxury. They have no protector, no refuge to flee to; and every penny laid out for their advantage would return with tenfold usury to us. And
shall

shall we, from year to year, continue to spend our riches and strength, in raising up thankless rival states, and deny these unhappy beings a poor pittance of their own labour to make them a farther advantage and glory to us? Forbid it, honour; forbid it, justice; forbid it, prudence; forbid it, humanity. What is here proposed may, possibly, on trial, be found ineffectual, though I have good ground to think it would not. But, surely, were the feelings of humanity, the researches of knowledge, and the observations of experience, collected in the consultation, they could not fail in producing some plan capable of answering the wish of reason, religion, liberty; capable of securing these blessings to Britain and her children. Reason will not be backward in a work that is to produce her advancement; Liberty will think no concession great that is to extend her empire; Piety will not reckon that expence excessive that has the purchase of souls in view. Even selfish Interest will open her ears to the suggestions of accumulation. Slow methodical discretion must preside over, and guide the gradually opening scene. What unwearyed application have the premiums offered for

for the discovery of the longitude given rise to? And what object more worthy of public encouragement than this, which proposes to recover to reason, to utility, and happiness, a multitude of human creatures drowned in ignorance and wretchedness?

Though what is here written, if deemed worthy of notice, will certainly expose the author to much abuse from men, whose wishes and interest, as they imagine them to tend, are opposed to all reformation; yet, is he not sensible of having had any thing sinister, selfish, or censorious in view; nor can he, in any respect, be particularly benefited if the improvement were to take effect? He has intended no slight or injury to individuals, or to any condition or community of men, separated from their opposition to the unalienable rights of human nature and the dictates of benevolence and religion. His consolation is, that a simple love of truth, and a sincere desire to do good, alone excited him to the attempt, and that many pious and learned persons thought it worthy the attention of the public. And, after seriously reviewing the whole, he sees no objection to be offered before hand, either against the

the practicability, or expence of the plan, except the manners and prejudices of the age. On the contrary, there are considerations to encourage both individuals and government to make the attempt; arguments of strength, not only to be drawn from topics of humanity, liberty, religion, but also of safety, conveniency, positive interest, and profit, both public and private.

Doubtless, in a subject like this, where we must be satisfied with general accounts, probable conjectures, and analogical reasoning, a person inclined to take the other side may select many things to be objected to, many to be contradicted. But, till such a man can, simply and generally speaking, vindicate on the score of religion, morality, or even policy, the conduct, or rather negligence of government, with respect to the sugar colonies; till he can prove that the diet, the clothing, the labour, the punishments of 4000,000 negroes, ought to be left entirely to the discretion of their masters; till he can affirm, that slaves have an adequate remedy, either in law, opinion, or interest, as practised or understood among us, against the parsimony, insensibility, prejudices,

U mean-

meanness, ignorance, spite, and cruelty of their owners and overseers; till he can shew, that the present state of our slaves is the best possible state, both for them and their masters, into which they can be put; and that we had a right to ravish them from their country, to transport, and place them in our own; till he can shew it to be *impossible* to make them real Christians, or to render them more useful members of the state than they are at present; till he can shew that reason is convinced, humanity pleased, that liberty has no claim, and religion no wish; the justice of our remarks must remain established, and the necessity of that attention to the improvement of slaves, both as men and Christians, which is here inforced, must remain unconfuted.

May God, in his providence, in his goodness, esteem us a people worthy of a blessing, so valuable and extensive as the social improvement and conversion to Christianity of our slaves would indisputably be. In this prayer, every pious, humane, and considerate reader will join with

The AUTHOR.

F I N I S.

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